



141

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

*Chap.*

BS480

*Shelf*

E5

1835

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











LECTURES  
ON THE  
DIVINE INSPIRATION  
OF THE  
BIBLE.

DELIVERED IN SOUTH READING.

---

BY REUBEN EMERSON, A. M.  
Pastor of the Congregational Church in that Place.

---

Second Edition, with additions.

BOSTON:  
PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM PEIRCE,  
No. 9, Cornhill.  
1835.



BS480  
.E5  
1835

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1835, by  
WILLIAM PEIRCE,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

BOSTON:  
Webster & Southard, Printers,  
No. 9, Cornhill.

LC Control Number



tmp96 025247

## PREFACE.

---

The following brief Lectures were occasioned by a respectful request of a number of young men, who professed to disbelieve, or, at least, to have doubts, as to the divine inspiration of the Bible; a part of whom, as was understood, questioned the existence of a God, which occasioned an introductory Lecture on that fundamental article of natural and revealed religion.

The author is induced to submit this humble production to the public eye, not because it has any superior claims to merit, but because it is on subjects of most interesting and important concern;—because it is requested by those whom he is accustomed to respect;—because it may benefit an attentive and respectable auditory;—and because the times require that the subjects be often, and more distinctly presented.

The objections and difficulties, which were communicated to him for solution, he has endeavored respectfully to notice in their proper places, and bring the whole into as narrow a compass as he thought compatible with perspicuity; and in a plain and familiar style and manner.

Quotations are made without marginal references, because those who *could* make use of them, *need* not, and the rest

either *would* not, or *could* not. Hence, in this little work, unnecessary, and because it is less encumbered.

These Lectures, which were not written with a view to publication, appear as they were delivered, save a few verbal alterations, and a few abbreviations, which do not affect the sense; and thus, as the hearers will perceive, the number is diminished.

That they may contribute an item to the temporal and eternal benefit of those for whom they were particularly designed; of the numerous and attentive hearers, and of all under whose inspection they may fall, is the earnest desire and prayer of the

AUTHOR

## CONTENTS.

---

### LECTURE I.

The Being and Attributes of God, - - - 9

### LECTURE II.

Preliminary Remarks concerning Divine Revelation.  
Objections answered, - - - 24

### LECTURE III.

Arguments for the truth of the Bible. Mankind *need*  
a revelation from God. What the Bible testifies  
of *God* and *man*, is consonant with reason. Ob-  
jections answered, - - - 36

### LECTURE IV.

The Bible harmonizes with itself. Manner and cir-  
cumstances under which facts were related. Mir-  
acles. Objections answered, - - - 54

## LECTURE V.

Its continued existence. Its effects on the tempers and lives of men. Its powerful advocates. Ob- jections answered, - - - - -	75
--	----

## LECTURE VI.

Fulfillment of prophecy. Objections answered, -	90
---	----

## LECTURE VII.

Recapitulation. Evidence peculiar to believers. Ex- hortation. Inferences. Conclusion, - - -	105
APPENDIX, - - - - -	122



## LECTURE I.

### ON THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

While I give a few Lectures on *natural* and *revealed religion*, I trust my friends, for whom they are principally intended, and whose sentiments and persons I mean to treat with due respect, will give me their careful attention, and a candid hearing. And should I offer anything in the course exceptionable in their view, or which should require further explanation, at their instance, I will seasonably and candidly notice it.

*Natural religion* respects the existence of a *God*, or of *one uncreated and eternal Being*. As this is *fundamental*, I think it proper to begin with it. And here I assume the position, and submit the proof, that *reason dictates the existence of such a Being*.

My text, therefore, are the words of Aratus, a heathen Greek poet, as recorded, Acts, 17: 28. For we are also his offspring.

The meaning probably is, 'we are the creatures of his power, who is supreme among the

gods.' "We are *his* offspring." Paul says, v. 28, 29, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, *For we are also his offspring.* Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." i. e. If, as you acknowledge, we are the offspring of this "*unknown God*," to whose honor you have an altar inscribed and dedicated, it is preposterous to think that he is like gold, or silver, or stone; for this inert matter, which you set up to worship, cannot produce even *animal* substance, much less *intellectual* beings like us: How can *inanimate* matter produce *intelligent* beings?

My present design is to prove by *reason* only, that there exists in the universe ONE ETERNAL BEING.

In treating this momentous subject, I shall adopt that mode of argumentation called *a posteriori*; i. e. arguing from effect to cause; which mode of reasoning is necessary in proving the existence of a *first cause*.

When we see an *effect*, reason dictates the necessity of adopting the following general principle, viz. *every effect must have an adequate cause*: i. e. a cause, which is adequate to *produce* the effect.—To illustrate this, take a case. You see the earth open by the plough: you say that the opening of the earth is the *effect* of the plough, which is the cause. You see the plough move about in certain ways for the better opening of

the earth ; and you say that the *cause* of that *effect* is the ploughman. But what carries the plough forward ? You say the *team* is the *cause* of that *effect*. And you will say that *team* is the *effect* of an antecedent *cause*. Trace back those beasts through all preceding generations till you find the *first* animals of the kind. What will you now say ? Did those *first* animals start into being without a cause ? or are they the effect of an *antecedent* cause ? They cannot be *self-produced* ; this would be an absurd position. Are they *eternal* ? That cannot be, because *eternity* supposes *unchangeableness*. If matter be eternal, it must always exist in the same state, good or bad, in motion or at rest : for, if there be a *change*, that change must be effected by something *extrinsic*, or *aside from itself* ; as that, which *begins* to be, must have a *cause*. Every *change*, therefore, must have a *cause* adequate to produce it. Matter, then, which is ever changing, must have a *beginning* ; therefore, *not eternal*. And to say that a thing created itself, or that *nonentity* can produce *existence*, is as absurd as to say, that a thing *may be*, and *not be*, at the same time ; both which are acknowledged absurdities.

Shall we then, in order to account for the *first* existence of things, resort to the strange doctrine of *chance* ? What is chance ? Let atheists define it, and they shall be soberly answered. I believe no atheist ever has told us what *chance* is, or attempted to give a definition of it. — If atheists mean by it, that things come into being by some *previous* cause, undefined, *that* cause must *have*

a cause, or be the *first* cause ; and if the *first* cause, then, as we have seen, that *first* cause must be *eternal*, *intelligent*, as the God we adore, having none of the properties of matter, and subject to none of its modifications and changes.

On the atheistical scheme of chance, he is completely uncertain what will happen next, or whether there will be any *next* ; for on his scheme there is no established *law* ; for *law* supposes design, intelligence, agency : he can arrive at no *certain* conclusions ; make no *certain* calculations ; must always remain in doubt. To-day he exists a *man* ; to-morrow, should there chance to be another day, he may exist *an ox*, or a *plough* ; or he may not exist *at all* ! To-day, his companion and children may be sources of happiness to him ; to-morrow, his chance or fate, whichever he may please to call it, may transform them into marble or scorpions ; and just as likely, as to have made them what they are. Those objects which now delight the eye, the ear, the taste, may before to-morrow, be changed into what is most horrrific, distressing and disgusting, and so *remain*. The seeds you plant or sow in your gardens and fields, instead of yielding its own kind, will be as likely to yield, if *anything*, any other kinds, or even *animals* ; as likely sea-serpents and crocodiles ; one thing as likely as another, for he has no established *laws* of matter on which to depend. And if he sow *gravel*, he will be as likely to have a harvest of *wheat*, as if he sowed wheat. There is nothing on which he can depend, for all is doubt and uncertainty. But, *chance* may make him

*happy* as long as he lives in the world ; or *miserable* ; may put an end to his existence ; or continue it forever ; *may provide a heaven of eternal joy ; or a dreadful hell, and shut him up in doleful torments forever !!!* — My friends, I am not *trifling*, but appeal to your good common sense and *reason*, for the truth of what I say.

Let us then soberly come to the *reasonable* conclusion, that the God whom the Athenians ignorantly worshiped, is the *eternal and unchangeable God, and great first cause*.

We will now attend to proof of the properties, called *perfections*, or *attributes* of Jehovah.

I first remark, that God is a *pure Spirit*, not *material* ; of infinite *intelligence*, as all his works give abundant evidence of design, of *power and wisdom infinite*. Who can analyze a particle of which the vast machine of nature is composed, and not acknowledge the Creator to be *almighty* ? It is thought by sober philosophers, that the minutest chymical analysis evinces the *power* of the great Creator as really and conclusively as that of a world. Yet, to most men, it is not so conclusive proof of power. I ask, then, who can cast his eye through the vast expanse, where shining orbs, and shining worlds meet his vision, and contemplate their regular revolutions, the constant succession of day and night with varied seasons ; or reflect on his own existence, the operations of his whole organic system, especially the operation of his own intellectual powers ; the various capacities of his mind, perception and reflection, and

not be convinced that *all* was the effect of *infinite* and *independent* power?

And does not reason as loudly proclaim the unlimited *knowledge* of such a Being? Must he not have perfect knowledge of his *whole plan* as a wise master-builder, having all things always present to his view, even the minutest and remotest? And must not He, who superintends all worlds and atoms, not only *know*, but extend his *influence* to every particle? That eloquent expression of a king of Israel, Ps. 139, is truly philosophical; "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." He must, therefore, be *incomprehensible* by every other being in the universe, of whatever capacity. For it is as impossible, in the light of reason, for an infinite Being to *create* a Being of infinite capacity, as for a being to create *itself*, which is an absurd hypothesis. And, *finite*, however extended, can make no approximation, even towards *infinite*, as the endless multiplication of ciphers can make no approximation towards a unit. We are led to the borders of an immense field, which can never be explored;—to the margin of an immeasurable ocean, on which our feeble sight is lost? and are left to exclaim, "It is high as heaven,—deeper than hell,—the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea?"

Again; What *wisdom*, what *skill* is discovered



in the formation of the endless variety of surrounding objects? Reason utters her voice from the *bowels of the earth*.—The *mineral* kingdom, with all its variety and beauty and uses, furnishes evidence of the wisdom of Him, who formed and sustains it.—No less is true of the *vegetable* world. Reason's voice is heard from every tree and plant and flower, proclaiming that there is a God. Here you behold intelligence, design, wisdom. View their proportions and uses. There is neither want, nor redundancy. The exquisite texture of trees and plants; the minute fibres, and pores through which nourishment is conveyed to the remotest branches, together with their curious coatings, and the proportions of roots to trunks and branches and a hundred other phenomena, *all* evince consummate *wisdom*.

No less distinctly do you hear the voice of reason from *animal* existence.

Here, as in the vegetable kingdom, you perceive each to produce its *kind*. Can the atheist tell you why an acorn does not produce an apple-tree; or an oak, an orange? or why the whale, or any other creature, invariably produces its own species? Is this *order*, everywhere seen, *accidental*? Can he give a satisfactory reason for the constant occurrence of an equal, or adequate number of the *sexes*, in every age, and all over the world both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, for the continuation of the various species of being? Or, what will he say of the curious and wonderful construction of the *bodies* of animals, which are composed of solids and fluids?

of bones, muscles, tendons, fibres, arteries, veins, nerves, and membranes, with a variety of other properties, which compose the constituent parts of the body, with what is comprehended in anatomy, surgery, pharmacy, and chymistry? Do not their several proportions and uses exhibit wonderful skill? Who that observes such a perfect organization, and considers that the whole operates, and is conducted by known and fixed *laws*, but must be convinced that all was ordained by *infinite intelligence* and *skill*? Even the analytical examination of an *eye*, or an *ear*, though the examination should stop at the analysis of these, or *one* of these wonderful organs, would most conclusively prove, that the hand which formed them, as well as the mind that planned them, must be divine. “He that planted the *ear*, shall he not *hear*? he that formed the *eye*, shall he not *see*?—He that teacheth man *knowledge*, shall not he *know*?

You also hear the voice of *reason* from the *heavens* over our heads.

The *planets*, which constitute a part of the solar system, are hung in such a wise and skillful manner that they have performed their revolutions round the sun, century after century and millenary after millenary, in perfect harmony.

The primary and secondary planets, which are of vast sizes and distances from one another and from the sun, their common centre, maintain a perfect balance. The planet on which we live, whose circumference is nearly twenty-five thousand miles, yet eleven times less than Jupiter, and



ninety-five millions of miles from the sun, and moving round that resplendent orb at the rate of fifty-eight thousand miles an hour, yet never varies from the laws of motion. — Is there not *design* discovered here, *wisdom* and lofty *intelligence*, as well as *power*? And do not the *useful changes*, the half of which have probably not been discovered, produced by the annual and diurnal revolutions of the earth, as seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, spring and autumn, day and night, prove the *wisdom* of the Artist? Again;

Does not the *sun*, which, on account of his transcendent lustre and benign influences, has been worshipped by many an idolater: — Does not this vast luminary, whose diameter is more than seven hundred thousand miles, enlightening and invigorating that system, and around whose mighty magnitude the planets move by the action and re-action of motion and attraction, and in orbits defined with perfect precision, display, in a wonderful and most convincing manner, the *wisdom* and *power* of Him, who gave his being and fixed his destiny? — Lest any should think these calculations to be wild *conjectures*, I will say, that from such *exact admeasurements* all *eclipses* of the sun and moon are calculated with exactness.

The *fixed stars*, of which I cannot now speak particularly, supposed to be eighty millions of suns, round which roll two billions and four hundred millions of worlds, and *known* to be vast bodies of light, at unmeasured distances from one another and from us, forming a beautiful and extended canopy over our heads, speak, though

more silently, yet not the less intelligibly, the *wisdom* as well as power of their Creator, and remind us of Addison's beautiful Hymn; the first verse of which I repeat, and refer you to the rest.

"The spacious firmament on high,  
With all the blue ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,  
Their great Original proclaim."

And does not *reason* utter her voice, too, from *intellectual* nature? Must not that Being, who can *create* intelligences, be himself *infinitely intelligent*? Reason responds to the sentiment, yes, yes, he *must* be; it cannot be otherwise: *He must be infinitely intelligent.*

We will now advance from what are called *natural* perfections or attributes, to the proof of God's *moral* attributes from the light of nature. These are summed up in the term *goodness*. Will not *reason* give her testimony, that the Being above described, or rather *spoken of*, and that but distantly, must be *good*?

The heathen, perhaps universally, have believed in *one good* being, having only the light of nature. Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 4. and Belshazzar and his queen, ch. v. speak of '*the holy gods.*' Comparing this expression with the Greek, it is evident that the *singular* number was meant, for the Hebrew and Chaldee word has no singular; so that the translation, according to the sense probably intended, was *the holy God*. They said of Daniel, "In whom was the Spirit of *the holy God.*" And shall not *we* as rationally conclude, that a

Being of *all intelligence, power and skill*, must also be *good*? Must not every attribute, which an infinite Being possesses, be possessed by him to an *infinite* extent? As what is true of a *finite* being is true of him to a *finite* extent, so what is true of an *infinite* Being, must be true of him to an *infinite* extent. This principle being granted, and I see no fallacy in it, then, if God is possessed of *any* goodness, he is possessed of *infinite* goodness. And from *another* principle, which I think will not be disputed, viz. that *misery* is inseparable from *moral evil*, we may reasonably argue, that God cannot be an *evil* Being. An *evil*, or *malignant* being, must, from the nature of the passion, be *unhappy*. But an *infinite* Being, to be *evil*, must be *infinitely* unhappy. But God must be *happy* as seen from the nature of his other attributes: Having infinite power and wisdom and knowledge, he *can* be happy, and of course will be: and if happy *at all*, *infinitely* so; hence, *not evil at all*, but *infinitely good*, because happiness and goodness are inseparable. Having *knowledge* to discover all antecedents and consequents, and *wisdom* to select the best, or what he shall most desire, and *power* to execute whatever he shall choose, he must, from the nature of the case, be *infinitely happy*; hence *infinitely good*.

Among the few things we *know*, this is one; happiness is desirable. It is what every one is ever seeking after. God will be happy then, if he *can* be; and who will say he *cannot be*? As it is so manifestly absurd to say he can be *infinitely good* and *infinitely evil*, I will say nothing on the supposition. But I will say this; if he

were infinitely *malevolent*, or *malignant*, he would *exercise* that passion to an infinite *extent*; Then his universe would be completely, unremittingly, and eternally *miserable*!! And, as we have seen he must *himself* be so, for the *exercise* of a malevolent passion is inseparable from misery. If God is *happy* he is *good*, and if good in *any* degree, he must, as we have seen, be good in an *infinite* degree.

I ask, further; will any deny that there is *some good* in God's universe, since there is *happiness*, which is a good, and which we all experience? Well, then, *God* must be good, and if so, *infinitely* good.

I will observe further, that the circumstance of the *limited existence* of *natural evil*, is, in one way, proof that God is good. The way I mean is this; an infinitely *malevolent* being would render us as miserable as our capacities could admit; the measure of our misery would be according to the measure of our *capacity*. But we know we do *not* endure all we have a capacity for enduring. It follows then, that God does *not* render us as miserable as he is *able* to render us: He is therefore not *infinitely* malevolent; hence he has *no* malevolence; for, as has been shown, if he have *any*, he must have it to the whole extent of his nature. — As, therefore, *good does actually exist* in God's universe, and only *limited evil*; it follows that God must be good to *some* extent; and if to *any* extent, then to the *whole* extent of his nature.

I have one principle more to state in favor of

the goodness of God, as seen by the light of natural reason : It is this ; the *evils* endured are the legitimate *consequents of a perversion of the order which God has established*. This position is supported by observation, history and experience. Reason and the instincts of all animal nature join to prove the principle correct. Health and comfort are not lost nor diminished by following the dictates of *reason* ; but both are diminished and lost by the *perversion* of its dictates. This every glutton and drunkard may know by painful experience. Nature forbids *excess*, and prescribes, in its kinds, adaptations and proportions, what is most conducive to health and comfort, both as to body and mind.

I could discourse an hour in proof and illustration of this principle ; but it must suffice that I invite you to the investigation, and experimental proof of it. Do this, and I am satisfied with leaving it where it is. — I say then, if the *misery* endured comes by the *perversion* of the order of reason, or of nature, then an *adherence* to that order is conducive to health and happiness. It follows then, that the Being who *constituted* nature, must be *good*.

I suppose the curious speculator is ready to inquire, *why* an infinitely good Being should suffer *evil* to exist in his universe ?

I have not undertaken to reconcile *all* difficulties or account for *everything*. — It must suffice that I now briefly remark, that there is nothing whereunto we can liken the Almighty to perfection. *Finite* beings cannot possibly comprehend

the purposes of an *infinite* mind. He has constituted us *free, rational* agents ; and what we do, we *choose* to do : and whatever *evils* he suffers to exist in his universe, are in consequence of a *perversion* of the powers he has given the creatures he has made : and he suffers it to be so for reasons, which lie back of our ken, and, which we never may be able to discover : and we should never sit in judgment upon the government of an *infinite* Being, till we are able to comprehend his whole plan.—And what if beings of limited capacities, like ourselves, meet with *mystery* ? Is it not a reasonable presumption, that, in the existence and government of an infinite Being, we shall find *some* things, if not many, which are beyond our comprehension ? Rather, is it not an argument in *favor* of the existence and attributes of God, because there *are* mysteries in his existence and government ? *Reason* most certainly teaches this.

And it is hardly necessary to observe, that there can be *no unrighteousness* “in Him, in whom all fullness dwells.”

If now I have fairly proved from reason, as I trust I have, that there is *one Being at the head of the universe, who is uncreated, and has originally and forever all natural and moral attributes*, which can render a Being worthy of the highest station and loftiest praise and adoration, I trust my hearers will candidly consider, and allow to the arguments, all the force that reason demands.—As in courts of Justice every man is presumed to be *innocent* till he is *proved* to be



guilty, so every theory and system are presumed to be true till a *better* can be *proved* to exist. Till then there should be no rejection nor substitution.

I only add, that the atheist is brought into this dilemma; either, that there is at the head of the universe *one infinite Being*, who governs all things, or, that *every particle of matter must possess all the natural attributes we ascribe to God, in order to take its place, and sustain the office it holds for the regulation and harmony of the universe.*

I conclude this lecture with the following remarks.

1. If there is such a Being as I think I have proved to exist at the head of the universe, we may rest assured, that he will order and superintend all events from the greatest to the least everywhere, in infinite wisdom, equity and goodness. As nothing is too *great* for the grasp of his all-comprehending mind, so nothing is so small as to escape his notice. Even the *wrath of man* he will make subservient to his wise determinations, and will suffer nothing to transpire in any part of the universe, which shall eventually tarnish his glory, or frustrate his purposes. His *power* will *execute* what his *wisdom* shall *devise*, and his *goodness* *adopt*.

2. We infer that the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, and dwelleth in the high and holy place, is worthy of all the adoration and praise of all creatures, in all worlds, at all times, and under all circumstances.

Let us then bow, with all reverence, fear and awe profound, before Him, 'whom heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain.'



## LECTURE II.

### PRELIMINARY REMARKS CONCERNING DIVINE REVELATION. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

I now approach the subject of divine *revelation*. — But before I proceed to direct proof that the Bible is the word of God, I shall offer a few preliminary remarks. And I observe,

1. God is *able* to make a revelation to man.

He is perfectly *acquainted* with the human mind in all its powers and susceptibilities.

As I am now to meet the *deist*, who admits the existence and attributes of *one God*, as the case has been argued, I must meet him, as I did the atheist, on the score of *reason*. And I think he will freely admit, that the infinite Deity is abundantly *able* to reveal what he may please to reveal to the intelligent mind of man. He certainly can do it as easily as he *gave instinctive* and *intellectual* powers; and I think it will not be disputed.



I therefore observe,

2. There is nothing *improper* or *inconsistent* in his doing it.

Can any one see the least *inconsistency* in the character of the great Eternal in inspiring the mind of man with knowledge of the *future*? informing him of things he *could* not, or *would* not otherwise have known? Is the supposition at all *unreasonable*? Provided always that the supposed revelation be not *inconsistent* with the known attributes of the Deity, nor unimportant as it respects the condition of his rational creation, but that it must strictly comport with the high and infinitely exalted character of the eternal Jehovah. It is to be presumed that no *reasonable* man can deem it *unreasonable*, that God should give such a revelation to man as *he* should deem consistent, and necessary for the benefit of man. — Without enlarging here,

I remark once more,

3. That a revelation from God, *is important*, and *necessary* for the good of man.

And here my text are the words of a heathen philosopher born at Athens about 340 years before Christ, and quoted by Paul, 1 Cor. 15: 32.

*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*

Epicurus here expresses the feelings and sentiments of most of the heathen world, in every age. All futurity was so deeply involved in darkness and in consequent gloom, even though they should die like the brutes, that they went into all manner of sins and gross immoralities, which the grosser passions suggested, and to which their

depravity so strongly prompted them. "Let us eat and drink," live as we list, "for to-morrow we die;" enjoy the present, for we are ignorant of the future. Do not men *need* a revelation from heaven, then, to restrain and control those passions, the unbridled indulgence of which, must render themselves, as individuals, and the civil and social state most unhappy?

*Ignorance of the character of the Supreme Being*, renders a revelation from God necessary.

The views the heathen have of God are *gross*. They suppose him to be such a one as themselves, having all the passions they have. Hence they *feed* their gods, and *act out* before them those sordid passions, which they ascribed to them supposing it to be an honor and pleasure to those senseless idols. And they are careful to have gods of such character, as are gratified with an unrestrained development of all the grosser passions of depraved nature!

How needful also it is that they should be corrected relative to *their own character and condition as sinners*! The heathen do indeed know that they are *sinners*, and in a wretched condition; hence their fruitless sacrifices, their continual and vain oblations. These things prove that they know that all is not right with them.

Their greatest philosophers stood in *doubt* respecting *futurity*, notwithstanding "The heavens declare the glory of God," "And the invisible things of him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made," and man *might* have conclusively argued from the light of nature,

and the known properties of mind, that he is immortal, and ought always to worship, and must ever be accountable to the great Creator, Governor and Benefactor. — But, as men '*do not like to retain God in their knowledge,*' they need a revelation clothed with supreme authority, to reveal more clearly his character, a future state, and their obligations to serve him, with sanctions of law to enforce obedience, and bring them to rational enjoyment in both worlds.

I need not enlarge here, for I have not one that hears me, who does not instantly see what a deplorable condition the community would be in, if all were to adopt, and act upon the Epicurean principle, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

But there is *another* attitude in which I wish to set the heathen world before you, which is expressed by Epimenides a Greek philosopher, quoted by Paul, Tit. 1 : 12. "The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow-bellies." And Paul, who had been among them said it was true.

Here are three distinct traits of character. The first is, they are *liars*: Their general character was falsehood and deceit. Their word was good for nothing. They are *always* liars: no dependence upon them at any time; always upon the watch to deceive, lie and defraud.

Now, judge of that state of society in which every one must exercise *constant jealousy* over another, and not able to know anything by what another says, however he may say it.

The next trait of character our author gives

his countrymen, is *beasts*. They had the cruelty, sottishness and filthiness of beasts; given to beastly lust and indulgence, regardless of decency, cleanliness, or moral order. Further, they were *evil* beasts. Not only did they *brutalize* themselves in everything unbecoming rational beings, but *evil, cruel*, "hateful, and hating one another;" regardless of the common welfare, destroying reputation, property, peace and comfort, and *life* too! Can you well estimate the unhappy condition of such a people?

But there is one other characteristic of these heathen, though what we have seen we should think bad enough: They were "*slow bellies*." — The Greek, which was the native tongue of this prophet, means, '*a lazy, idle* people, who had much more inclination to eat and drink, than to work in any honest labor.' This comports with their other traits of character, and is in perfect keeping with their being '*liars and evil beasts*.'

This is a fair, undistorted, though very imperfect description of the heathen world in general, and agrees with the report of all those who have been among them, in different ages and different parts of the world. And still they say, 'The half has not been told us.'

When the excellent Swartz, who was sent out by George I. of England, to reform heathen society in the East, was in one of the principal cities that was besieged and almost reduced to starvation, no promises or bonds of king, nobles or people could procure relief, as they had no character for *truth*, but "always liars," while

the *bare word* of that good missionary, who had established his character for *truth*, relieved the city. Read the accounts of the Islanders of the Pacific, who were *all* that the Grecian prophet declared of the Cretians; and perhaps more, as many of them were *cannibals* or eaters of human flesh.—In India, you know, it is according to the laws of those half civilized people, to destroy *themselves, the aged, decrepit, diseased, widows and children!* and all this by the authority of their prophets, priests, poets, and sacred books. Oh, what an imperfect idea can we form of the debased and revolting state of such a community!

I may remark here, that *human science* may do much, as it has done, to meliorate the condition of men; but the most polite and refined by the liberal arts and sciences have fallen far short of that humanity and sympathy, integrity and benevolence, which form a *Christian* state.

I might add here, that the *degraded state of females* throughout the heathen world, savage or sage, evinces the want of more light from heaven.

As the God of nature did not take woman from the *head* of man, to rule over him, so neither did he take her from his *feet*, to be trodden down; but from his *side*, to be his *companion*. Whether those heathen men, whose number is not small, that believe and say, that women have no *souls*, and are therefore to be treated as *slaves*, do not give as much evidence that *they* have none, is a question I leave you to decide. Of *one* thing I am *certain*; females have never been considered and treated so, *except in heathen countries*.

It might be useful to extend the development to a great length, as it might easily be done, of the abominable *doctrines*, horrible, and no less abominable *usages*, and wretched conditions of the whole heathen world. But, have I not said enough to satisfy the mind of every man, that the revelation of 'a more excellent way,' is *necessary*, for the greater good of our species. Faithfully compare *our* condition with that of the *best* state of heathen society, and I think it will be conceded, that the nations, which have enjoyed the *Bible*, are *superior* both in civil, social, literary, moral and political respects, to the most *refined*, and *enlightened* heathen nations.

It follows then, that a *revelation from God* is *desirable*, and *necessary* for the benefit of the human race.

I know that unbelievers, who undervalue the Bible in relation to its *influence* on men in society for their enlightening, elevation and happiness, are inadequate judges of what they *would have been without* a revelation, as they judge with *too little* reading, with *less* observation, and with *no* experience. They are not aware of the influence, which *Christian principles* have had on those, whose education has been under their discipline. It is hence, that men are apt to prejudice in the case before us. They take only a *partial* view of the subject, as they are born and educated *under* scripture principles, and have had but little acquaintance with the state of society which was formed *without* such principles.

But I must leave this particular where it is, and proceed to the Book I call sacred.



When that learned and eloquent Jewish lawyer, who was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, was persuaded to be a Christian, he said, as recorded, 2. Tim. 3. 16. "All scripture is given by *inspiration of God.*"

As this is the proposition I am to prove, it will be incumbent on me, first to tell you *what I mean by the inspiration of God*, as applicable to the Bible.

I will first briefly tell you what I do *not* mean by it.

And I do *not* mean that the Bible is *partly* true and *partly* false, or of *doubtful* authority, as the legends and oracles of the heathen. No; the various and *most ancient* manuscripts have been critically and learnedly examined, compared, and collated, and stand authenticated by men of various religious opinions, of different ages, and are received as authority by them all.

I do not mean that God *approves* of all the sentiments there recorded; or that he *inspired*, or *moved* every character there brought to view, to speak and act as they did: He always *approves* the *good*, and *disapproves* the *evil*.

But, by the Bible's being the revelation, or inspiration of God, I mean that it is a book of *true and faithful statements*. The writers were *inspired*, or instructed by the Lord, to *compile* the book as a volume of *facts* as they actually took place. And, whether the writers came to the knowledge of things recorded by *ordinary* or *extraordinary* means they were divinely instructed to write and transmit them to posterity as truths,

which the Deity considered of importance to be known by all future generations. It may be the sayings and doings of wicked men, or wicked angels, and in themselves true or false : — God inspired men to write them down as *facts*, — things that actually transpired, just as they are recorded. What is related that the *devil* said and did, is related, *not* as what God *approved*, but as what was really said and done. Not that God *inspired* sinful beings to do and say what they did, but inspired his holy *prophets to record* what they said and did, as matters of *actual occurrence* ; and their pens were so guided and guarded, as not to record a *mistake*, or anything *false*, or *unnecessary* to be transmitted to posterity.

In recording things *future*, and of course, which human sagacity could not have discovered, the writers were informed of them by him, who “seeth the end from the beginning,” and who has access to the mind in an extraordinary manner, and then directed them to put those revealed things upon record, as matters of *direct revelation*. So of the *laws, doctrines* and *duties*, which God saw necessary for men in their individual and social relations. While they were directed *what* to write, they clothed the sentiments in their own language and style, and were *so superintended* by the Spirit of inspiration, as not to record a mistake, but to convey the *whole truth as God would have it*. This is what I understand Peter to mean when he says, “The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”



The *history, geography, chronology* and *biography* you find in the Bible, are all true statements of facts, times, places and character.

And here I wish to retain the distinction I make between the *kinds* of inspiration. The inspired writers were under the *guidance* of the Spirit of God, to write what was *true and necessary* to be revealed and transmitted to succeeding generations. What of *history, &c.* they did not remember or know, God brought to their recollection and knowledge, and directed them to record. What they *did* know, and God thought proper to be embodied for man's use, he directed them also to write down as matters of fact. But, it should always be remembered, that it no more follows that God *approved* of all the sentiments and actions there recorded, than that the *historian* approves of all contained in his history; or that *you* approve of everything you relate.

I think now you will not misunderstand what I mean, when I say that the Bible is *divine revelation* or *the inspiration of God*.

I have been the more particular on this point, because I consider it a matter of no small moment, that you have a clear and correct understanding of the nature and character of the divine writings. The sum is, the *whole book* is the book of *God*: — what is *pure* and *holy* he *approved* and *inspired*; and all the rest he inspired men *to record* for the use of the world.

I will now attempt to solve an astronomical difficulty or two, which has been handed to me.

The first is in Gen. 1: 16 — 19, in connection

with verses 3—5. The difficulty, as I understand it, lies here; that in the 3d and 5th verses, 'there was *light* and *darkness*, day and night, which composed the *first day*, and yet in the 16th verse, where account is given of the fourth day, the sun and moon are spoken of as being *then* made. The question is, *how* was there *light* and *day* *before the sun and moon were made?*'

I reply by saying, that, in the great work of creation, *two* Hebrew words are used, as also two in the Greek Septuagint, which answer to the Hebrew, the one translated *created*, the other *made*, as ch. 2: 3. "Which God *created* and *made*." The first, which is rendered *created*, means, both in Hebrew and Greek, *a calling into existence*, the second, *a giving of form* to matter that lay in chaotic confusion. Verse first, "In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth," i. e. brought the matter of which they were composed, into being, when, as verse 2, "The earth was *without form* and void." Yet there was *light*, though there was no *sun in form*, till, v. 16, "God *made* two great lights," brought the light into *form*, which he called the *sun*, and gave *shape* to the matter of which the *moon* is composed, which was the fourth day. — There was, *substantially* day and night after light was *created*; though more distinctly after the sun was *made*, or brought into the form of a resplendent orb.

Further, it may seem by verses 16, 17, as though the *stars* were made *principally* to give light upon the *earth*, when astronomers consider the fixed

stars to be suns to other worlds. I have only to say that the sense is, (as the stars are brought in incidentally,) that the sun and moon are particularly referred to as giving light to the earth; and the stars incidentally mentioned *as being made*.

There is another difficulty suggested, Joshua, 10. "The sun stood still."

Suffice it to say here, that God inspired the Bible in the language common people could understand. If it had been written with *scientific exactness*, it could be understood only by *scientific men*. 'Indeed, modern astronomers, when they do not purposely express themselves scientifically, use a similar language.' So our Almanacs always express it; and so we all say, the sun *rises* and *sets*. And for the same reason Joshua said, "The sun stood still."

But I am asked, "If the sun stood still, or the solar system *stopped* in its revolution but for a moment, what would be the consequences?"

Should I answer as a mere *philosopher*, I should say that the whole system would become completely unhinged, and wild confusion would run through the whole. But if I were to answer as a *divine*, I should say, that *God* could *stop* the motion of the whole, and set the whole in *motion* again without the least derangement; for He, who *constituted* the laws of matter, can *control* them as he pleases. — So of the shadow going back ten degrees upon the dial of Ahaz: 2 Kings, 20: 11. Let none object to such displays of power: for is it not a thing to be desired, that God should occasionally perform wonders, to

remind the world of his power, and impress the minds of men, who are so prone to forget him, of his infinite *greatness* and *supremacy*, that the nations may *fear before him*?



## LECTURE III.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE TRUTH OF THE BIBLE.

1. MANKIND NEED A REVELATION FROM GOD.
2. THAT WHAT IT TESTIFIES OF GOD AND MAN ACCORDS WITH REASON. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

We will now turn our attention more directly to the claims of the Bible. And you will allow me to observe, that it is a matter of primary concern with us, whether this book, which presents itself before the world with such lofty claims, be indeed entitled to the respect, honor and dignity of *the book of God*. — The question before us is, whether such claims can be plainly and honorably sustained. If they *can* be, it is of the last importance to know it. It deserves then the most serious examination, and most patient investigation. Let us approach it, therefore, with a candid mind, and with an open and honest desire to

know the truth concerning the claims of this book. And may the Lord help us all to give the subject, which concerns us all alike, due deliberation and regard.

My text is what the learned enemies of Christ said to the man born blind, whose eyes Jesus had opened; recorded John 9 : 29. "We know that God spake unto Moses." The matter to them was beyond dispute, "we *know* that God spake unto Moses."

My *first* argument to prove the Bible a divine revelation, is, that it is *just such a revelation as mankind need*.

It has been proved, I trust, that mankind *need* a revelation from Him, who is of infinite wisdom, knowledge and goodness. Among all the writings of the wisest and best sages of antiquity, *none* has ever been found to have such influence in reforming the *morals* of men *civilizing* the savage state, and rendering them *happy*, as the Bible. That their *morals* are reformed by it, and society improved is evident to every one, who has taken almost no pains to inform himself. *Infidels* themselves, and even the most talented among them, have confessed it; and confessed too, that the powerful sensibilities and passions of human nature have been *greatly* cultivated and improved, and society *greatly* benefitted by the influence of the Bible.—In Hume's history of England he remarks to this effect; The *Puritans* had the *purest* morality, and the English nation were indebted to them for the first spark of *liberty* that was ever struck out in that kingdom." And Na-

oleon told the Catholic priests, that 'the *Protestants* were the best subjects he had.' I need make no comment on the character, and habits of the *Puritans* in England, and the *Protestants* in France; for their adherence to the principles of the Bible have been proverbial. Many enlightened unbelievers in divine revelation have been willing to support the public teaching of that system simply on *political* views, as it is the *best* of all systems to promote order and happiness in community. — When the French nation, which had adopted the principles of Voltaire, who said he could revolutionize Europe with his quill, as he did, had reduced his principles to practice, and thus 'tried to do without God,' and without the Sabbath, and without the Bible, and found anarchy and bloodshed to follow in train, they began to try to retrace their steps, in the persuasion that the Bible was more friendly to the happiness of the Republic, than any other system.

The noble and virtuous *Socrates* labored hard to *reform* the young men of Athens, and succeeded to some extent, but far short of his expectations, with all his admirable philosophy, and said 'he *despaired* of a thorough reformation, till God should reveal a better system, and that system come clothed with the highest authority.'

And should it now be asked, What makes *us* to differ from infidel or heathen nations? Why are not our footsteps marked with blood and all abominations to satiate the malignity of human depravity, or to appease the insatiable passions of imaginary deities, and offering human sacrifices



by hundreds and thousands? Why are not ten thousand of our widows in a year, as in India, burning upon the funeral pile of their departed husbands, and thus many ten thousands of children, bereaved of both parents at once, left to perish, or left to the mercy of a rude, inhospitable and inhuman world? — I ask, what but a revelation from a Being of infinite wisdom and benevolence can dispel the clouds of ignorance and superstition, reform the world by taming the ferocity and softening the unfeelingness of man's depraved nature? Did not Plato and others acknowledge their need of instruction from heaven, such as their philosophy failed to impart? Notwithstanding the Greeks were a scientific, polite, and refined people in many important respects, yet, according to the testimony of their wisest philosophers and statesmen, they were extremely debased and corrupt in their morals. The temple of Venus was thronged by people of all classes, many of their *virtuous* philosophers not excepted.

And here I may remark, that the term *virtue*, meant, in Rome, *the love of country*. And Voltaire says, that 'in Italy and France the word means the love of the arts and sciences; and that it meant the same in Greece.' If they *lived up* to their religious systems, whatever they were, they were *virtuous*. As *we* call him virtuous, who lives up the principles of the *Bible*. David Hume adopted the principles of Socrates, Seneca and others, that adultery and suicide are lawful. And that the religion of *nature* not only taught

and exhorted to such practices, but *exhorted to deceit and revenge*; while the doctrines and duties stated and defended in the *Bible*, if believed and reduced to practice, would effectually overturn all inhuman and detestable practices; would make every man the *friend* of every man, introduce universal peace and good will, supersede all the vast apparatus of war, locks, bolts, and prisons; and the grand strife among men would be *who would do the other the most good*. No book but the *Bible*, or what was probably taken from it, ever taught or produced such happy results.

Let me further say, that there is not a law, prohibition, requisition, ordinance, or institution in the Bible, that militates with the best good of man. I say more, that man's highest happiness is *indissolubly connected* with obedience to the whole law. The benevolent Legislator of the universe has so wisely constituted things, that the *most obedient* are the *most happy*. Hence *perfect obedience* is *perfect happiness*. Does not the Bible then, which contains such, and none but such laws, carry with it irrefragable proof of divinity?

And I may further remark, that it was reserved for the Bible to bring life and *immortality* to light, and distinctly teach the way to enjoy the favor of the supreme Ruler and Judge of the universe, of which Plato and many other distinguished philosophers, who had a longing after immortality, confessed that they knew nothing with *certainty*.



And may I not further remark that the *laws* of the Bible have been copied, imitated or partially borrowed by the most enlightened nations. The best human laws in all christendom, and these are the best among the nations, are a *transcript* or near *imitation* of those laws, and show, by evident features, whence their chief excellence was derived. And I think it may be safely stated, that whoever is acquainted with the history of nations destitute of the Bible, will be convinced of the amazing inadequacy of the best of their systems of religion and morality to render their condition, as rational and social beings, even tolerable. The goodness or badness of principles is to be tested by the adoption of them, and reducing them to *practice*, or by carrying them out into their legitimate *consequences*. Take, then, the grand and leading principles, which constitute the substance of the Bible. Reduce to universal practice one cardinal sentiment which runs through the book of God; viz. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," and the condition of society must be good.

But what are the *legitimate* effects of the best systems of *paganism*? Take one of them and carry it out in practice; viz. '*Every man has a right to procure his own greatest good in the way he may think most eligible.*' Without comment, you know what would be the condition of the people were such a principle practiced. And here I will answer another objection; viz. "Judging the Bible by the effects it has produced

on mankind, it leaves no mark of a divine original."

My first reply to this is, that we are not to judge of the *value* of a thing by the *use* that is actually made of it, but by the good it *would* produce if *properly* improved. Because *gold* is used for the nefarious purposes of bribery and oppression, of slavery and war, will you say that *gold* is a *bad* thing? So you are not to judge of Christian principles by the use wicked men make of them, but by their *legitimate* consequences in practice.

I ask, then, with a stronger emphasis than ever, *what would be the state of the world* if the following principle were *universally drawn out into practice*? "WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO UNTO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM?" If it would not be *heaven* upon earth, it would be a near *resemblance* of it.

I close this head with the beautiful description of Christian benevolence 'given by an eminent statesman, member of the British Parliament. The elegant sentence is this: "True Christian benevolence resembles great and majestic rivers, which flow from an unfailing and abundant source. Silent and peaceful in their outset, they begin by dispensing beauty and comfort to every cottage by which they pass. In their further progress they fertilize provinces, and enrich kingdoms. At length pouring themselves into the ocean, where, changing their names, but not their nature, they spread throughout the world the expansive tide of their beneficence."

I now proceed to another argument in favor of the divine inspiration of the Bible,

2. What it testifies of the *character* of *God* and *man*, is *harmonious with reason*.

In this respect, the book of revelation seems to be little less than the second edition of the book of nature. I mean by this, that whatever the Bible declares of God and man, as to character, may be discovered by reason.

The Bible coincides with reason in ascribing to God all natural and moral perfections, and in representing him as worthy of all love and service. But because this is not discovered by men *without* a revelation, is no proof that they *could* not have discovered it. The secret is, "They did not *like* to retain God in their knowledge." Their deficiencies and absurdities are not to be charged to the darkness of *reason*, but to the darkness of their *understandings*, which arises from the moral blindness of their *hearts*; two things, which Hume, Bolingbroke, and Voltaire acknowledge to exist in human nature.

The Bible harmonizes with reason, too, relative to the character of *man*.

Read all history, and unite its testimony with your own observation, and see if the Bible be not *reasonable* in its description of the human character. Reason responds to the declaration of the Bible, that "*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*" In *no* respect is there a discord between the *Bible* and *nature*. The Bible may, in many things, be *above* reason, but in nothing *contradictory* to it. For instance;

Reason teaches that there exists at the hand of the universe an *eternal Being of infinite perfections*. So does the Bible. But neither *explain the manner* of his existence. Therefore the objection against the Bible on the score of *mystery*, lies with equal force against reason. The objection before me is this; 'All obscure and mysterious parts of the Bible ought to be rejected as a revelation from God, because such a Being as God would make *no* communications to men, which they could not understand, but are obscure and mysterious.' In a logical form, the objection is this; 'An infinite Being as God is, would make no obscure and mysterious communications to men; But the Bible contains obscurity and mystery: Therefore all that is obscure and mysterious in the Bible cannot be from God.' But this objection lies as much against *reason* as *revelation*. Can *reason*, which proclaims the *existence* of God, inform you *how* he exists, or clear away all *obscurity* and *mystery* from his existence? If not, then you must, to be consistent, *reject* reason. Nor can reason inform you *how mind actuates matter*, or *how* I can raise my arm by an act of my will, which without the spirit, would be as motionless and insensible as the limb of a tree. Further, a *truth* or *fact* may be revealed, while there may be many things obscure and mysterious *about* that truth or fact. It is a revealed truth or proposition, that *God exists*. This is a plain proposition, and as easy to be believed as any *other* proposition. You are told that incorporeal beings exist in heaven; and it is as easy to believe this, as it is

to believe that human beings live in China. But whatever of mystery or obscurity there may be about those existences, we can understand the bare *propositions* as easily as any other. And we can understand the proposition, *that there are mysteries*, and yet not be able to *develope* them. There is something obscure and mysterious in the doctrine of *eclipses* to such as do not understand that branch of astronomy; and yet, who does not believe in the existence of eclipses? And who cannot *understand* that *eclipses do exist*?

But the objection goes farther, "*that the most learned find obscurity and mystery in the Bible.*" And do they not find *some* obscurity and mystery about the *existence of God*? and the *union of spirit and matter*? An elegant French writer remarks, that "either religion must tell us *nothing about God*, or *what* it tells must be beyond our capacities." And I add, that it is *one* thing to believe that *God exists*, and another, to understand *how* he exists. So we can believe that *mystery exists*, and not understand *how* it exists; and this is not revealed. It is no part of revelation to *develope* mysteries, while it informs us of the existence of beings and things, *about* which many things are obscure and mysterious. What objections, therefore, can lie against the Bible, more than against nature, on account of obscurity and mystery? The man that is unable to dissect a *gnat*, should be slow to assume the powers of anatomizing an infinite mind. Are we not to expect that a written revelation from an infinite Being should contain propositions, which, though

*plain in themselves* and easy to be understood, yet surrounded with obscurity and enveloped in mystery ; as great, at least, as the volume of nature ? Shall we reject both *natural* and *revealed* religion, and become skeptics ; or believe and receive both, which is surely the most reasonable. The moment you will clear one proposition in the volume of nature of mystery and obscurity, I will engage to clear the whole volume of revelation of *all* that is obscure and mysterious. For we come to the certain *knowledge* of many things in *connection* with which there are many things inexplicable. Mr. Locke recognizes this principle when he says, “ *Certainty of knowledge* is to perceive the agreement, or disagreement of ideas, as expressed in any proposition. We have the knowledge of *our own* existence by *intuition* ; of *other* things by *sensation*. *Reason* first discovers and finds out proofs ; and secondly, disposes of them regularly and methodically, and laying them in a *clear* and *fit order*, to make their connection and force plainly and easily perceived : Thirdly, in *perceiving their connection* ; and then making a *right conclusion*. *Reason is natural revelation*. *Revelation* is natural reason *enlarged* by a new set of discoveries, communicated by God immediately, of which reason vouches the truth by the testimony and proofs it gives that they came from God.”

I say, then, if we will believe in *no system* about which there is *mystery* ; in *no proposition* that is involved in *obscurity*, then we must not believe *any* proposition however plain and demon-



strable; provided we cannot understand *everything about it*. Then we must not believe in the existence of an infinite *God*, for his existence is *mysterious*: nor in *our own*; for we are a mystery to ourselves. Nor in the existence of *animal* or *plant*, for there are many things, about them all, which we cannot comprehend or understand. All is *ideal*, or else *plain propositions* are involved in obscurity and mystery, which *propositions* we can receive and understand without understanding everything which those propositions involve.

The next objection that lies before me is raised from a "comparison of the moral virtues of heathen philosophers, as Xenophon, Seneca, Socrates, Plato and Confucius, with the great men of Israel, as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and Solomon, under a supposed revelation."

I have no disposition to *depreciate* the moral virtues of the former, nor unduly *exalt* those of the latter. We will recognize a principle already brought to view,—that the nature and value of principles are to be determined by their *legitimate* consequences in *practice*. Now if those philosophers named by the objectors, and others that might be named, had lived up to such principles as the Bible sustains, how was it that they thought *suicide lawful*, and how commit it, as two of them did, and in harmony with their principles? Xenophon and Plato were the pupils of Socrates, and though moral men in general, doubtless imbibed the principles of their preceptor. And *Confucius*, though he taught many excellent precepts, and was an excellent man, yet he held to principles that were latitudinarian.

But still the question is *not* how they actually *do* practice under their respective systems, but how they *would* practice, if they strictly *conformed* to them. None will dispute that the *French*, in their ‘terrible republic,’ acted upon the infidel and atheistic principles of *Voltaire*; nor dispute that our pilgrim *fathers*, in laying the noble foundation of this free, and enlightened, and happy republic, acted on the principles they found in the *Bible*. Still, I repeat, that the great question for ultimate decision is, *not* how men *do* practice, but how they *would* practice if they acted in *accordance* with their respective principles.

‘The character of *David* and *Solomon*,’ it is objected, ‘was less moral than that of the men, who had not a revelation.’

As to *David*, he was not a *good man till* after the affair of *Uriah*; and was ‘a man after God’s own heart,’ only in his *official* character. And as to *Solomon*, it is probable *he* became a good man in the latter part of his life, as the book of *Ecclesiastes* seems to indicate.

And his *Songs*, which are objected to as divine revelation, written in the glowing figures of Hebrew poetry, are an *allegory* to represent the *love* and *strong attachment* of Christ to his saints and they to him, and are considered by men, who hope they have experienced the renewal of the Holy Ghost, ‘profitable for doctrine.’ We know there is such a thing as false delicacy, and fastidious taste. Language, too, which would be considered pure and chaste in one age, would not be considered so in another. This remark may



apply to many parts of sacred and profane writings, as well as to the Song of songs.

But, '*the cruel and barbarous acts of Israel and their leaders,*' is brought against the divine inspiration of the Bible.

I ask here, if the *civil laws* of the Jewish commonwealth were not superior in point of equity and justice, to the laws of Lycurgus and Solon, or any other code the world has ever seen?—But respecting the *real or supposed cruelties* of Israel in their wars, &c. these prove *human depravity*, of which the Bible gives abundant testimony, but do not *disprove* its inspiration; for that book *nowhere approves* of such barbarities as it records. Besides; the *destruction* or punishment of some of the nations was by *divine command*; but not the *cruelties* attending the punishments. Has not God a right, as chief Magistrate, to punish his rebellious subjects in any way his infinite wisdom may dictate, whether by *fire, famine, earthquakes, inundations, pestilence or sword*? to send one sinful nation against another, or command his *own* people to inflict punishment on the wicked nations according as *he* shall judge expedient, as well as *our* government punish according to crime? Is not this according to the most enlightened notions of public justice? *Human governments may err in apportioning punishment to crime, but God cannot.* And, I may add, *he alone* is competent to decide *how much* punishment sins committed against himself *deserve*. Now, if this sentiment is according to the dictates of our enlightened *reason*, as I think it is, then God could command

Moses and Joshua to be his *executioners* in his administration of public justice, and *he* not be chargeable with injustice, nor *they* with cruelty.

There is another objection against the *necessity of divine revelation*, and against the *goodness of God*, on the principle that it *were* necessary; viz. "*But a small part of the world has it.*" The logic of the objection is this; if a revelation from God be *necessary*, and God is just and good, *then all men would have it*. But all men have it *not*; therefore such revelation is *not* necessary, or God is *not impartial and good*, as he does not give it to all.

One thing to be remembered here, is, that one alleged reason for the *necessity* of a divine revelation to man, is his *depravity*. Another thing to be remembered is, that this *depravity* is the reason of men's *rejection* of a revelation from God. And I suppose that few, if any, will dispute the position, that men are now, as they have been, very unwilling to receive the Bible *as the word of God*, although its authenticity be as well attested as that of any other book.

And I further observe, *that the Bible has been within the reach of all nations*. The Egyptians had Joseph and Israel in the midst of them more than four hundred years. The Assyrian and Persian empires had the Hebrews *by* and *among* them. In their prosperous and independent state, 'their sound went into all the earth;' and in their *captivities*, divine inspiration was in the *midst* of them. The Bible was carried through the Grecian and Roman empires, and proposed to rulers and ruled. About two hundred years after

Christ, Constantine, emperor of Rome, when she was mistress of the world, embraced Christianity, and propagated it through the world as the universal religion for man; and now, the nineteenth century finds *three fourths* of the world *destitute* of the Bible!! Where then does the fault lie? Does it prove that the world do not *need* it, or that God is *partial and not good*, because men *will not have it*? If you offer your *life-boat* to men on a wreck, and they *refuse* your kind offer and *drown*, does that prove they *did not need* your boat, or that *you were unkind*?

I may add here, too, that *Confucius*, that noble Chinese philosopher, who lived about the date of some of the last prophets, and probably had some knowledge of them, trained his three thousand disciples more exactly on the principles of divine revelation than any other man destitute of the Bible, yet was unsuccessful in bringing his own countrymen to receive and practice his excellent precepts. Notwithstanding he was a nobleman, and prime minister, neither he nor his good principles could influence the people to virtue, or to the adoption and practice of those principles. And such was the dissoluteness of the king and his court, that he retired to private life out of disgust, and died, at a good old age, in solitude! And when he died, so celebrated were his virtues, that even the dissolute king exclaimed, "The gods have removed him from the earth, because they wished to punish her inhabitants."

I will close this lecture with one or two brief quotations. Says a learned Chancellor of one of

our middle states ; “The general diffusion of the Bible is the most effectual way to give efficacy to the just precepts of international and municipal law. It most pointedly condemns every species of cruelty, unkindness, uncharitableness, selfishness and hardness of heart. A *despotic* government may live without the Bible ; but a *Republic* cannot. The melioration of the moral condition of fallen man, has been in every age, a favorite object with the philanthropic legislator. For this object Solon propounded his theory, and Lycurgus his, and Numa his. In *modern* times the experiment has been made of erecting a republic without the Bible ; made, too, under every circumstance that could aid the hope of success ; the profoundest statesmen, the most learned philosophers, and most chivalrous and able chieftains,—the mightiest combination of talent the world ever beheld, united in the daring enterprize. “The terrible republic” was created ; but from her withering eye, polluting touch, and deadly embrace, even the fathers that had formed her recoiled with dismay, and sought refuge from the workmanship of their own hands, under the banners of an iron despotism.”

I only add here a few words of lord Bolingbroke, an English deist ; “No religion ever appeared in the world, whose natural tendency was so much directed to promote the peace and happiness of mankind, as *Christianity*. No system can be more simple and plain than that of natural religion as it stands in the gospel. The system of religion, which Christ published, and his evan-

gelists recorded, is a *complete system* to all the purposes of religion, natural and revealed. The gospel is, in all cases, one continued lesson of the strictest morality and justice, of benevolence and universal charity."

I presume you will not task me to reconcile these frank concessions of this noble lord with his deistical writings; or to tell how a great man could say so much, and yet endeavor to annihilate the book he had so eulogized. I can only account for it on the principle that the understanding sometimes gets the better of the depraved affections, and then speaks out the truth. O, may every *heart* speak out the same truth, know it by happy and large experience, and enjoy it forever. Such as are of this character *have internal evidence* of the divine original of the Bible, while sinful nature, by hating and opposing it, *gives evidence* that the book is *holy* and from God; altogether *unlike* the moral character of the carnal heart.

## LECTURE IV.

3. THE BIBLE HARMONIZES WITH ITSELF. 4. MANNER AND CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH FACTS WERE RELATED. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

That the Bible is divine revelation, is evident,

3. *As it harmonizes with itself.*

We have seen that it harmonizes with *reason*; let us now see its *internal* harmony.

That the Bible was written by different men, and at different and far distant periods of time, is evident from its own testimony, and that of collateral writers.

What we call *profane* history, (and we call it so to distinguish it from sacred,) proves that those books and those men existed at the times, which the Bible testifies they did. Still, all parts of it *agree*. From Moses to Isaiah, was 700 years; from Isaiah to Malachi, 300: from him to John, who closed the book, 400. So that from Moses till John's death, in round numbers, was 1500 years. Notwithstanding this length of time, there is no jar, but perfect *harmony* through the whole, as one connected system, leading the mind to the same great objects and results, and it carries upon the face of it the design of a Master. Does this have the appearance of *forgery*? *Wicked* men could not if they would, and would not if they *could* write such a book. It prophesies *evil*



against them. And *good* men would not if they could, impose upon the world a book of fables and falsehoods for divine revelation. And I can see no inducements adequate to move any man or body of men to make such an imposition if it were practicable. Hear a few lines from Dryden, to this point.

“Whence but from heaven could men unskilled in arts,  
In different nations born, in different parts,  
Weave such agreeing truths? or how or why,  
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?  
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,  
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their prize.”

It should always be remembered, that the history of the Bible is of far greater *antiquity* than any other writings: Else, how could it show, as it does in many instances, the *origin* of absurd *fables* found in other histories of those remote times? This shows their greater antiquity; and also that other writers speak of, and quote from these sacred books. In this connection I ask how it can be accounted for, that, during the long period of fifteen hundred years in which ‘the Bible was in writing by princes, priests, shepherds and fishermen, (and without comparing notes,) and who wrote laws, history, prophecy, odes, devotional exercises, proverbs, parables, doctrines and controversy, and yet all exactly *coincide* in the exhibition they give us of the perfections, works, truths and will of God; of the nature, situation and obligations of man; of sin and of salvation, of this world and the next, and, in short, in all



things connected with our duty, interest and comfort,' and yet no disagreement, but *harmony* among them all? " *Apparent* inconsistencies," says an English writer, once an unbeliever, " may indeed perplex the superficial reader, but they will all vanish after a more accurate investigation. The exact coincidence that is perceived among those by whom the Bible was written, by the diligent student, is most astonishing, and cannot be accounted for on any *mere rational* principles without admitting that they wrote by divine inspiration." The contrary opinion would involve a *greater mystery* than is involved in admitting that those writers were moved by the Holy Ghost. It is said that ' Mohammed produced his koran by little at a time: This occasioned an evident *inconsistency* of one part with another, concerning which he only said, that God had a right to change his laws as he saw good.' A very cheap and easy way to get over the difficulty.

In support of what I have said respecting the distance of time, and different persons concerned in writing the Old Testament, and yet harmonious, I refer you to the Chaldean, Grecian and Roman histories: and some of those historians, with Josephus and others, respecting the *New Testament*.

Respecting the *harmony* of the Bible, I will make one quotation from Irenæus, who lived not more than one age after the death of John; particularly the *oneness* of the belief of the Christians of those days. He says; " This faith the church has received, and though dispersed over the whole

world, assiduously preserves, as if she inhabited a single house, and believes in these things as having but one heart and one soul, and with *perfect harmony* proclaims, teaches, hands down these things as though she had but one mouth. For though there are various and dissimilar languages in the world, yet the power of the faith transmitted, is one and the same. Neither the churches in Germany, nor in Iberia, (i. e. Spain,) nor among the Celtæ, (in France;) nor in the east, nor in Egypt, nor in Lybia, nor in the middle regions of the earth, (i. e. Jerusalem and the adjacent districts,) believe or teach any other doctrines; but as the *sun* is one and the same throughout the whole world, so the preaching of the truth shines everywhere, and enlightens all men, who are willing to come to the knowledge of the truth. Nor will the most powerful in speech among the governors of the churches say anything more than these; (for no one can be above his master,) nor the most feeble anything less. For as there is but *one faith*, he who is able to speak *much*, cannot enlarge, nor he, who can say *little*, diminish it "

In the first three centuries, you may be referred to 'Clement of Alexandria, (besides the one just cited, and Josephus,) 'Tertullian of Carthage, Origen of Alexandria, Cyprian of Carthage, Gregory and Dionysius, Lactantius, and many cotemporary writers, as well as Eusebius of Cesarea, a voluminous and diligent writer, as Professor Paley calls him.' After him all Christian writers since have been as full of quotations

from the Bible, as the sermons of modern divines. I also might have mentioned Ignatius, who lived within 40 years after the ascension, bishop of Antioch. If any should still question the harmony of the Bible with *itself*, or with the dictates of *reason*, I recommend to such, as I may to all, the reading of Butler's Analogy.

Shall I now need to enlarge on the next objection before me, 'that the internal evidence of the Bible does not warrant a belief of its divine original?' Yet I will just add, that when we consider the purity of its doctrines, principles and precepts; the equity of its laws, requisitions and prohibitions; its agreement with reason; all tending to the greatest happiness of man, whether as a mere citizen, of this world, or a candidate for immortality; its genuine simplicity, unity and impartiality; its loftiness of thought, sublimity of style, and universality of application; that it approves and requires nothing but what is good and best, and all that is so, and prohibits nothing but what is evil, and all that is evil; we wonder most, that any, who have made themselves duly acquainted with its contents, should ever question its divine original. We are not astonished that Saome Jennings, a leading deist in England, when, by request of his deistical brethren, he undertook to write against the Bible, and began and carefully read along to find its weakness and detect its errors, soon became convinced of its divine original: he wrote a book, indeed, but gave it the title of 'The internal evidence of the Scriptures.'

Here I will meet another objection, which is supposed to lie against the internal evidence of the Bible; viz. God's repenting; as Gen. 6: 6, 7. "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth," &c.

I suppose all will admit, that the language of the Bible, as that of any other book, is to be understood in a literal or figurative sense. Also, I suppose all will agree to the following rule of interpretation; viz. the obvious or literal sense is the true sense, where necessity does not forbid, or require a different sense. We will try this case by this admitted rule. Therefore, can the infinite Jehovah repent in the common and literal meaning of the word? Reason and Scripture unite to declare it *impossible*; for the Bible is only the echo of reason when it says, 'He is of one mind, and changes not.' We are then under the necessity of interpreting the passages of this description in a figurative sense. It is speaking after the manner of man: i. e. it is an *accommodation* of language, which indeed admits of *change*, not in the mind of God, but in his *dispensations* towards men. God changed his providential dealings towards them, which *appeared* like repentance. His drowning the world he had made, had the appearance of sorrow that he had made it, as a man will abandon his work that does not answer his reasonable expectations. So, figuratively speaking, God 'repented, grieved,' that he had made man, whose conduct was most unreasonable, and contrary to his law; and, after waiting 120 years for their reformation, withdrew his

teaching and restraining influences, and destroyed them by a flood, as a just magistrate will award due punishment to evil doers. The interpretation I have given, is on the acknowledged principles of interpretation.

As I am asked, I will briefly answer, 'What was done with the Lord's tribute;' Num. 31 : 40. Compare Exod. 30 : 11 — 16. The Lord's tribute was what he ordered the people to contribute for his worship and service, whether *men* as one tribe, or *property*, which he claimed by tax or otherwise, for religious use. And, this was done with it; it was applied to that use; passed into the hands and under the care of the priests to be employed in the worship and service of God, "As the Lord commanded Moses."

As in a former lecture, I quoted from a Grecian philosopher, who testified, that the Cretians were always *liars*, it is objected, that David said with reference to the Hebrews, that '*all men were liars.*' i. e. 'It was no more true that the *heathen* were liars, than those under a supposed revelation.' Now the reason of my quoting that philosopher and other authors, was to show what was the *practice* of the heathen, and that their *practice* was according to their *principles*; while the wrong practice of such as had a revelation from God, was not according to revealed principles, but according to their depraved propensities. And the way to test principles, is not how men *do* practice under them, but how they *would* practice, if they acted in exact conformity to them. As that philosopher gave the general character of

the Cretians, David gave the general character of his nation. "I said *in my haste*," not in a hasty, and inconsiderate manner, but in his *haste* when fleeing from the unbridled rage of Absalom, who had broken all the commandments. If my son, and so many of my subjects as are now with him in this monstrous usurpation, whom I have laid under a thousand obligations, can be guilty of such gross rebellion and ingratitude, in whom can I place confidence? Alas, all men are untrustworthy! I know of none in whom I can safely repose confidence!

But I must pass to another argument in favor of the Bible as the book of God, which is,

4. *The manner and circumstances under which facts were related.*

If the things said to be done were acknowledged to be true by those, who had their senses to bear witness; and in remembrance of which monuments were erected, and institutions were established, they could not be an imposition. If the deeds were done openly, in view of a multitude; if monuments were erected in remembrance of what had recently taken place; and if institutions were observed from the time in which they were said to be done, they must be true. For example; it is said that Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt: that the king refused to let them go; that by the mouth of Moses God threatened, and by his hand actually brought many judgments on Egypt, on account of which Pharaoh let them go: The king having still hardened his heart, (or God hardened it, which is the same thing; i. e. let him do as he



chose to do,) pursued the Hebrews with all the chariots of Egypt, their military strength; that they soon came in sight of the departing and terrified Israelites, hemmed in by a rough, thorny wilderness on the one side, and on the other a hideous mountain looking down with frowning aspect, before them the Red Sea heaving its sanguinary billows; behind them the exasperated Egyptians, pursuing with deadly hate! At this most critical and eventful crisis, and all hope had fled, Moses stood forth and foretold their salvation, and the destruction of their pursuers; stretched forth his rod over the sea, the waters divided, they marched on, and their pursuers after them on dry ground; Israel passed safely through, and the Egyptians were drowned! Israel sang the praises of God, marched three days' journey in the wilderness, the bitter waters of Marah were sweetened, the law given from Sinai clothed in terror, they marched on with a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night; they fed on manna, and drank water gushing and following them from a flinty rock; Korah and company were swallowed up in the earth for their rebellion against God's appointed leader of Israel. Now, all these things Moses did not pretend were done in secret, but appeals to their outward senses; "Your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did." Is this the language of an impostor? Could Moses make that multitude believe they had seen all those mighty deeds if they had not seen them?

Further; the institution of the *passover*, which they perfectly understood, was kept sacredly by all from generation to generation.



Moses, then, could not have imposed the writings, which bear his name, upon the generation in which he lived. If untrue, they were easy of detection. And the monuments and institutions, which were known by that and succeeding generations, transmitted from parents to children in unbroken succession, prove that they could not have been forged and obtain credence in any succeeding generation. Could those monuments and institutions be imposed on any generation following easier than on *that* generation? At what time could it be possible to raise monuments, make laws, and establish institutions, and pass them off as ancient things, which they had received by *tradition*, or as *then* recently taken place, unless the things reported were true? Could those monuments in Lexington, and on Bunker Hill obtain credence, if the facts they are designed to commemorate were not true? The imposition would be quickly seen, and one stone would not be left upon another. So the monument at Gilgal after the passing of Jordan, Joshua 4, could not be imposed on *that* generation; and no easier on any generation *succeeding*, for the same impossibility would exist. So of the code of laws. Who could introduce a new code of laws now, and make the people all believe that they were the same the fathers had, and which we ourselves have always acknowledged? Is there *any* generation on which such an imposition could possibly be made?—so of the institutions. There must be a time when they were first established; and if the events they were designed

to commemorate, were not true, they could receive no credence, and no succeeding generation could any easier be duped. The annual observance of the passover, the significancy of which they fully understood, was a standing evidence of the truth of the facts related. Also, the institution of *circumcision*, which was 600 years before Moses, and which was sacredly observed by that people, through all their succeeding generations, helps to confirm the authenticity of their other records.

Look at one thing farther: Moses transmitted to the people the law of ten commandments, wrote the judicial laws of the Commonwealth, and the law of ceremonies; delivered these to the priests to be read once in seven years to all the people: Joshua read the law, and Ezra, long after, to all the people; and no doubt the priests did so in all their generations, both the blessings and the cursings. The rest of the Old Testament represents the Jews as such a stiff-necked and rebellious people, and foretells such desolations, that had they not believed it divine, would they have received it as such, and retained it as the oracles of God?

Should any still halt in this thing, let me ask, is there a man of us that could believe one that should tell us, and tell us with an oath and twenty witnesses, that he had stretched his staff over this little lake, upon which the waters divided, and we all passed through on dry ground? You would think that man a fool, or insane, who should assert it.

Should any ask, how then did Mahomet establish his religion? I answer, as every historian

will tell you, *it was by the sword*. Were you to read of the many hundreds of thousands, if not millions that were slain to establish his religion, you would be persuaded that all the *reason* used, or no stronger reason was used, than there is in *steel*.

A woman of a conquered place tested his high pretensions to be more than Christ, by putting poison into his supper, a leg of mutton she had cooked for him and his servants, of which one died immediately, and was the occasion of *his* death, which happened sometime after. And her apology was, 'If he had been a prophet of God, as he pretended, he would have *known* that it was poisoned.'

We will now come to the *New Testament*. And I will introduce my remarks with the words of one of the greatest heathen monarchs that ever swayed a sceptre. It is recorded in Daniel 6: 27. "He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." The 4th and 5th chapters have similar concessions.

The writings of the New Testament may be proved genuine much in the same way as the Old

And here I shall particularly bring into notice the *miracles*, which were said to be wrought by Christ. He never drew the sword to establish his religion; nor Moses, nor the prophets, but appealed to reason and the senses. Said he, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not,

but if I do, though you believe not *me*, believe the *works*."

Now, if Christ wrought miracles *openly*, before a mixed multitude, in open day, what more proof was necessary, or what could they possibly have more in proof of anything? And that he did so work miracles, is evident from his appeals to his learned enemies, as Moses did. If our *senses* are not admitted for evidence, what can be proved?

And that Christ lived in the age recorded, and wrought benevolent miracles, is evident from profane, as well as sacred history. And here I am asked; "What is the origin of the four Evangelists?"

If by *origin* is meant, who composed them, I answer, the Spirit of the Lord *directed* those four men to *compile* the narrative contained in those books. The next question, "From what fountains did they draw?" may have this additional reply; they wrote what they *knew* to be true by the testimony of their senses, the Spirit of God directing them to write what they did, and superintended so as to prevent their recording error, just as he did the writers of the Old Testament, that they should give a *true statement* of whatever they were required to write.

It is further asked, "For what readers in particular, and with what aim did they write?" Answer; they wrote for the Jews, in particular, and for all men generally, and for the purpose that all might believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Savior of the world. They were *eye* and *ear* witnesses, and could no easier be deceived than

you can, that you now see and hear me. And his most sagacious and obdurate enemies could not gainsay the truth of the facts they witnessed : and they sought his life *because* he healed the sick and raised the dead, and were afraid that ‘all the world would believe on him.’ And if the evangelists had made any mistake in their records, there were enough to detect them with sufficient ease, and sufficient eagerness. Besides, they had no sinister motives to deceive ; for, in espousing the cause of Jesus of Nazareth, they sacrificed all worldly advantages, exposed themselves to the greatest sufferings, confiscation of property, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself. And certainly no prospect of *future* good could induce men of common understanding to try to pass a deception on the world, even if that were possible. And when the apostles told the people they had been the *murderers* of Christ, instead of denying, they sullenly, and tacitly consented to the charge.

After the resurrection of Christ, Paul asserts that he was seen by above five hundred at once. And besides this testimony, they proved his resurrection to others *by working miracles in his name*, and thus supported the truth of what they testified by witness from heaven ; God bore testimony by the miracles he enabled them to work, or rather, miracles *he* wrought by their hands. And his enemies, and the persecutors of the apostles acknowledged that ‘notable miracles were wrought by their hands.’ Was not this sufficient proof that those men were *divinely* author-

ized to commit to writing what they did, and that they were the *authors* of the books to which their names are affixed? Is better evidence required, or needed for anything? Is it not ample?

Besides; the change of the sabbath, and the institutions of the *Lord's supper* and *baptism*, which have been observed ever since his ascension, are standing witnesses of the truth of the New Testament. And, allow me to remark here, that the evidence of the authenticity of the *New* goes to prove that of the *Old*, and that they mutually prove each other. If the Old Testament is true, the New must be, for it is an evident fulfillment of that; a system carried through and completed, without which the Old would be incomplete, and much of it altogether unmeaning. So, if the New Testament is authentic, the Old must be, not only as the New is necessary as the fulfillment and completion of the Old, bearing evident marks of such fulfillment and completion, but, also as the New Testament contains many references to the Old, and particular citations, often referring to book and chapter, and always with the understanding, that Christ and his apostles considered the Old as the lively oracles of God. The proof is *mutual*. And need I add, that *profane history* corroborates the testimony already presented? Citations are often made to them and quotations taken from them both by friends and foes. So that we have as good reason, to believe that the books of the Bible were written by the persons whose names they bear, as we have to believe that the books ascribed to Cicero, Homer,



Virgil, Hume, or any other, were written by them. And if such human testimony is to be called in question in one case, it may be in the other, and in all. But if evidence *abounds* in favor of other ancient books, which are of later origin, evidence *superabounds* in favor of the most ancient, as these have a greater amount of collateral testimony.

I have not time, nor would it be desirable in these familiar lectures, to introduce the score or two of writers, both in favor and against the sacred volume, and those, who have incidentally referred to it, both Jewish, Christian and Pagan; but it must suffice that I add here, that such evidence is very abundant, and more than any other book has or can have; to say nothing more of the concessions of skeptical writers and their extraordinary modes of attack. The truth is, we must either believe nothing on human testimony, and thus fall into universal skepticism, or believe that the writings of the Old and New Testaments, are what they claim, or purport to be.

Here I will answer another query: "How, and at what time, did the four gospels become canonical, to the exclusion of what is called apocryphal?" By apocryphal is meant, *of doubtful authority, not belonging to the canon of Scripture*. As to "*how* the four gospels became canonical," i. e. considered divine revelation by common consent; I answer, by careful and critical examination and patient comparison of all the evidence *for* and *against* the various manuscripts that had any claims or pretensions to be the word



of God. And as to the *time when* the canon was settled ; it was soon after they were published, and inspiration had ceased, which was probably when *John*, about the year 96, finished his course.

I will further answer, in the words of an English writer : “ We may conclude, with the surest evidence of *reason*, that these Scriptures were handed down uncorrupted in the substantial of faith and manners. These records being once dispersed through all Christian churches, though at a great distance from each other, from the beginning of the second century ; so universally acknowledged by men of curious parts and different persuasions ; being multiplied into diverse versions, almost from the beginning ; being so constantly rehearsed in their assemblies ; so diligently read by Christians, and so riveted in their memories, that Eusebius mentions some that had them all by heart ; and lastly, so frequent in their writings as now we have them ; — it must be certain, from those considerations, that they were handed down to succeeding generations, pure and uncorrupt.”

But we are still sometimes inquired of, ‘ How can *we* be sure that *we* have the true canon of Scripture, after the lapse of so many centuries, and learned men are often speaking of different manuscripts and versions ? ’ I answer, in the words of another : “ During nearly two hundred years, our present translation of the Scriptures has been extant, and persons of various descriptions made new translations of the whole, or of

particular parts; and scarcely any writer fails to mention, in one way or other, alterations, which he supposes would be improvements:— It may be asked, *how* then can *unlearned* persons know that our translation may be depended on, as in general faithful and correct?" 'Here let the inquirer remember, that the various and contending denominations of Christians, who, in various ways, maintain eager controversies with each other, do all appeal to the same version, and in no essential matter object to it. This proves that the translation, on the whole, is just; and that it is impossible for any party materially to deviate from it, while so many eager opponents are incessantly watching over one another. The same consideration proves the impossibility of the primitive Christians corrupting the sacred records, while heretics, Jews and pagans stood ready to oppose every deviation; nay, other churches would have protested against the alterations which any church would attempt to make.' Besides, '*no other* books were received by the primitive church, as a part of divine revelation. Many were sent forth bearing such names; but on faithful examination, *all*, except those which now form the New Testament, were rejected as spurious. And this shows with what scrupulous caution the canon of Scripture was fixed and retained: as the Jews are said to have counted the letters of the Old Testament, to prevent all imposition.

'The four gospels were very early received as the writings of the evangelists, whose names they bear. They were mentioned distinctly by the

fathers of the second century, as books well known by the name of *gospels*, and as such were read by Christians at their assemblies every Sabbath. And although the doctrines and events were related by those men, each in his own style and manner, and without concert, there is no jar or contradiction between them, but harmony in all essential points and circumstances. Here I am reminded of a reply which an English author made to Thomas Paine; viz. "Industry, ingenuity and malice have for ages been employed in endeavoring to prove the evangelists inconsistent with each other: yet, not a single contradiction has hitherto been proved on them. One thing is fact; these four men have done, without appearing to have intended it, what was never performed by any author before or since; — they have drawn a perfect human character, without a single flaw. This challenges investigation, and sets infidelity at defiance. EITHER THESE MEN EXCEEDED IN GENIUS AND CAPACITY, ALL THE WRITERS WHO EVER LIVED, OR THEY WROTE UNDER THE SPECIAL GUIDANCE OF DIVINE INSPIRATION."

I am again asked, "Does the present English translation of those gospels convey exactly the same ideas to us, that their original authors intended to convey to their readers?" I answer, *exactly the same* to those acquainted with the language in which they were indited by the Spirit of God, or in which they were translated under his superintendence. And I can further say, that, not only by what little I know myself, but by what multitudes, who have had the means of

knowing, agree in saying, that the *exact idea* is conveyed to every English reader, *which is essential to salvation*. And more need not be said here.

We will now look a moment at the resurrection of Christ, as recorded by Matthew, last chapter, to which the Jewish, if not the Roman records in substance agree. First, the angel testified, "He is not here, but is risen as he said." Then the women, who were competent witnesses, reported that they had seen and talked with him *after* he rose from the dead. Then the eleven testified that they had seen him alive after his death. And then the watch, who were so astonished as to offer no resistance, told their honest, unvarnished story of his resurrection. And the last testimony, though not least in importance, is the strange and self-contradictory and absurd concession of the learned and unfriendly rulers. They gave large money, and bribed the soldiers to take a false oath, by testifying that 'the disciples stole him away while they slept!'

Just examine this extraordinary expedient to disprove the resurrection of Christ. First, the soldiers were bribed to bear testimony concerning themselves, which, according to the known Roman law, was death to them. It was death for a Roman sentinel to sleep on his post. But, say the rulers, 'we will persuade the governor, and secure you' from the death you may fear by this law. Then, secondly, they take an oath, which the court admit as valid proof, 'The disciples stole him away while we slept'!! as though they

were competent witnesses of what transpired when asleep!! How would such testimony be treated in our courts? The witness says, such a man did so and so, at such an hour of the night, *while I was asleep!!!* But to such extremity were they driven, or let the resurrection of Christ pass as a truth current. This state of the case, astonishingly absurd as it is, was matter of record at the time, is preserved, and open to this day for the inspection of all men. The evidence, therefore, of the important and fundamental doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is as conclusive in point of clearness, as any case in law can be.

I will close this lecture with a few lines from Berkley's Minute Philosophy. Speaking of the truth of the Christian religion, he says, "It is a clear point, that it was spread abroad throughout the world, soon after the death of Christ. It is a clear point, that this was not effected by human learning, policy, or power. It is a clear point, that in the early times of the church, there were several men of knowledge and integrity, who embraced the faith, not from any, but against all temporal motives. It is a clear point, that the nearer they were to the fountain head, the more opportunity they had to satisfy themselves as to the truth of these facts, which they believed. It is a clear point, that the less interest there was to persuade, the more need there was of evidence to convince them. It is a clear point, that they relied on the authority of those who declared themselves eye witnesses of the miracles and res-

urrection of Christ. It is a clear point, that these professed eye witnesses suffered much for this their attestation, and finally sealed it with their blood. It is a clear point, that these witnesses, weak and contemptible as they were, overcame the world, spread more light, preached purer morals, and did more benefit to mankind, than all the philosophers and sages put together."

---

## LECTURE V.

### 5. ITS CONTINUED EXISTENCE. 6. ITS EFFECTS ON THE TEMPER AND LIVES OF MEN. OBJEC- TIONS ANSWERED.

I now pass to another argument, to prove the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, which is,

5. *Their existence in the world so long*, notwithstanding all the opposition the enemies of revealed truth have raised against them. Ever since the gospel was first proclaimed, it has had its opposers, who have sometimes been extremely virulent, and the more so as vice abounded.

Before Christ ascended, he commissioned his apostles to 'go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' 'They accordingly went forth; but were violently opposed by their own



nation. Still, at the risk of their worldly ease, and wealth, and reputation, and even of life itself, they propagated the unpopular doctrines and duties taught them by their divine Master. Some 'gnashed on them with their teeth,' others scourged, beat and imprisoned them. The Gentiles, who worshiped a plurality of gods, and deified the manes of their departed heroes, and constantly worshiped under the grossest systems of idolatry, must, from the nature of the case, have been their enemies, and would, of course, oppose Christianity. 'No one thinks,' says one, 'of anything marvellous in the preservation of the volumes of the Greek and Roman writers; for all men, in all nations, who had the power in their hands, vied in honorable strife and care to preserve them. They were never exposed to the deadly hate and superhuman malice of the men who put forth all their power and cunning to destroy the *Bible*. Antiochus left no means untried to destroy every copy of the Old Testament; his edict made it *death* for a Jew to possess or conceal a copy. So did Dioclesian and other Roman emperors respecting the manuscripts of the whole Bible. Yet has it not only not perished, but it cannot be shown that even one sentence has been lost.'—Now is not this *some* evidence that the omniscient God, in whose hand is every living thing, and who controls the free agency of men, had that volume in his eye and under his peculiar care, that neither those heathen emperors, nor wicked men whose lives it condemns, nor infidels of any size or order, should long even check its progress,



much less destroy it from the earth. It has not only had its existence, but wide and rapid promulgation.

The promulgators of it were 'in perils' among the heathen, as well as among 'false brethren.' Yet thousands embraced the gospel, and held it dearer than life itself, and helped to sustain it against all opposition. And so you witness the existence of it against power and arms, learning and malignity, from its first promulgation down through all succeeding centuries, to the present day. It has had its converts and advocates in every age, who, amidst calumny and persecution of every description and degree, have fearlessly advocated its unpopular cause, and in defiance of earth and hell, have proclaimed it abroad from city to city, and from one country to another, and established it among the different nations of the world. Hume, that arch infidel, predicted the downfall of Christianity in the nineteenth century. Voltaire as triumphantly asserted, that although it took twelve men to plant Christianity, his single arm should root it out. And Paine boasted, (but it was before he put off the harness,) that he had cut down every tree in paradise.

But it is a pleasing fact, that the very press that scattered Voltaire's baneful tracts, has lately been employed by the Paris Bible Society; and that in the very chamber where Hume uttered his evil prophecy, the first committee assembled to form the Edinburgh Bible Society. And *we* ourselves, my hearers, notwithstanding all past opposition to the

Bible by the great, the learned and the powerful, are living witnesses of its victorious existence *as descendents of pagan idolaters*, and as seen in the course of benevolent operations at the present day. The Bible is printed and printing in all the languages of the earth, and 'runs very swiftly' to the ends of the world. And how is all this to be accounted for on any other principle, than that the finger of *God* points out the way, and his power, though invisible, puts the mighty in check, and gives his word success?

I pass to another argument.

6. *The effect* the gospel has upon the *tempers and lives* of men.

It is well known, and ought to be well considered, that the hearts of all men, and the lives of most, are at variance with the gospel of Christ. The apostles, and the prophets before them, had reason to expect opposition from carnal men; they expected it, and received what they expected in full measure. Nevertheless, their preaching was attended with wonderful success. The enemy thought the *world* were going after Christ, and alleged that the apostles were turning the world upside down. Their efforts were indeed accompanied with irresistible power. Adamantine hearts were broken, and carnal nature changed; vicious and idolatrous lives were reformed; the hearts of the opulent were opened to feed the poor; the miser's griping hand was unclenched to contribute to the necessities of the poor, and spread the cause of truth, and maintain the pub-

lic and private worship of God. By hundreds and by thousands they have been turned from the greatest cruelties and impieties, to embrace and vindicate doctrines the most crossing to carnal nature, and to practice that distinguishing duty of the gospel, to "love their enemies, to do good to them that hate them, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute them." Many ten thousands of pagans have 'cast their idols to the moles and to the bats.' As dagon fell before the ark of God, so many an idol god they cast 'into the clefts of the rocks,' and sought after the God of the Bible, and like Saul of Tarsus, inquired with the utmost solicitude, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Such have been the effects of the gospel upon the hearts and lives of men, in past ages, and such are its effects at the present day. See heathen India and the islands of the sea, with parts of Europe and Africa, waiting for the law, and calling for instruction. What happy numbers of our own countrymen have experienced the triumphs of almighty grace. Men of all ranks, professions, literature, and character, have yielded to the superior power of the word and Spirit of God. Be assured, this blessed work of conviction, conversion and reformation has not been confined to the ignorant and weak, easily wrought upon and deceived, as skeptics are accustomed to say: no, look at our colleges, the last places to which you would point us for religious enthusiasm and fanaticism, and see some of the most obstinate, stout-hearted and deistical

bowing to the commanding power of the truth as it is in Jesus, and becoming the understanding and enlightened guides of science and religion, and thus be persuaded beyond a doubt, that the *origin* of such a record *must be divine*.

Should any still say, that these men are *deceived*; or that they are *duped*, imposed upon by the jesuitical cunning of the priesthood; or that 'much learning has made them mad,' I would ask them to discourse with them, and see whether they have lost the balance of their mind, and their reason has fled. It may be they would find reason stationed in her proper place, and able to meet their arguments, and detect their sophistry without the charge of weakness or insanity. I say, without fear of contradiction, that the Bible has had as learned and as powerful advocates, at least, as it has had adversaries, if not so many; that it has passed under the strictest scrutiny of many of the most learned and virtuous men, which the world has ever seen. They have examined the evidence with all the advantages of any men whatever, many of them with no prepossessions in its favor, and some of them with a strong bias *against* it. Eminent divines, poets, statesmen, moralists, physicians, lawyers and judges have thoroughly investigated and believed the Bible.

"What though Thomas Paine, who is well known," says a foreign writer, "to be both illiterate and immoral, insolent and satirical, though otherwise a man of good natural understanding, is an unbeliever in the divine mission of the Son of God?" And what though some other men of

more distinguished sense and learning may have disbelieved in the Bible? 'It may be of some consolation to remember, that the first characters, who ever adorned our world, in every department of human life, have not been ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Every man would do well to reflect, in these days of abounding licentiousness, to support the mind against the ridicule of professed unbelievers, that the learned divines, as Butler, and Bentley, and Barrow, and Berkeley, and Cudworth, and Clarke, and Sherlock, and Doddridge, and Watts, and Lardner, and Pearson, and Taylor, and Usher, and a thousand more, were believers in the Bible. That the poets, Spencer, and Waller, and Cowley, and Prior, and Thompson, and Grey, and Young, and Milton, and Cowper, and others, were believers. That the statesmen, Hyde, and Somers, and Pulteney, and Cullen, and Howard, and King, and Barrington, and Lyttleton, and Washington, and many more received the Bible as the word of God. That the moralists, Steele, and Addison, and Hawkesworth, and Johnson; that the eminent physicians, Arbuthnot, and Cheyne, and Browne, and Boerhaave, and Pringle, and Hartley, and Haller, and Mead, and Fothergil, and Good, were believers in the Bible. That the learned lawyers and judges, Hale, and Hailes, and Melmoth, and Forbes, and Pratt, and Blackstone, and Jones, and Marshall, were firm believers in the volume of revelation. Many of these great men were the ornaments of human nature, and many more that might be mentioned, whether we consider the wide range

of their abilities, the great extent of their learning and knowledge, or the piety, integrity and beneficence of their lives. They firmly adhered to the belief of Christianity, after the most diligent and exact researches into the life of its Founder, and authenticity of its records, the completion of its prophecies, the sublimity of its doctrines, the purity of its precepts, and the arguments of its adversaries. These were all men of independent principles, and the most liberal and enlarged minds. Take the names of Bacon, Newton, Locke, Boyle, Ditton, Addison, Hartley, Littleton, Woodward, Pringle, Haller, Jones, Boerhaave, Milton, Grotius, Barrington and Euler, in particular; they investigated the principles of the gospel to the bottom; they were not only satisfied with the justice of its claims, but gloried in it as the most benevolent and godlike scheme: it was their study in life, their solace in death.

It may be asked here, why are there so many that oppose the gospel, while such men as these, without the ridiculous charge of priestcraft, labored so hard and so successfully to establish it? May not one reason be that which Ahab assigned for hating Micaiah? It 'prophecies evil against them.' Another reason probably is, they give but little attention to the study of the book, and therefore are incompetent judges. 'When the learned Dr. Halley was throwing out some indecent reflections against Christianity, his friend, Sir Isaac Newton, stopped him short, and addressed him to the following effect: 'Dr. Halley, I am always glad to hear you when you speak about astronomy



or other parts of the mathematics, because that is a subject you have studied and well understand; but you should not talk of Christianity, for you have not studied it;—I have, and I am certain you know nothing of the matter.’ — And is it not true, that the warmest opposers of the Bible have been the least acquainted with its contents, and its warmest adherents most acquainted? No man of enlightened understanding will deliberately prejudge a case, or say he is a competent judge of the claims of the Bible before he has given them a critical and candid examination. And the advocates of the Bible, instead of shrinking from the most learned and critical examination of their sacred books, earnestly desire it, and invite to it, sensible it is not the study of the Bible, but the want of it, that leads men to skeptical views; as Lord Bacon says of philosophy: “A *little* philosophy inclineth a man to *atheism*; but *depth* in philosophy bringeth men’s minds about to religion.” I know that the evidence of the Christian religion does not rest on great names; but when we see a constellation of them, it should at least call us to a patient, candid and careful examination of its claims.

And I desire that the faults of those who advocate the Scriptures, be no longer considered as proof against them. Will you not all freely admit, that it is unreasonable the Bible should be answerable for the weaknesses, follies and vices of its advocates? And still these are often alleged as evidence against its divine original. Will *philosophy* endure to be tried by such a test? Is the weakness,



folly or vices of its advocates a test of its *genuineness*? Or will ridicule be considered, by any reasonable men, a test of true philosophy? I aver, that the Bible no more shrinks from reason and investigation than philosophy.

I might here introduce, but shall not, as a distinct head, in favor of the divinity of the Bible, its *antiquity*; that it is the most ancient book in the world. If the Chinese, or any other heathen, pretend to have more ancient dates, how do they prove it? Not as we prove our ancient dates. The Bible has proofs of its antiquity, which no other has. Let others show that they have always had witnesses *for* and *against* their more ancient books, as can be shown respecting the Bible. The Jews have, in every age, taken special care to *preserve* their sacred books; and those writings form their code of civil and sacred law, and *their* writers, as well as *pagan* writers, have spoken of their books and writers as unquestionably *ancient*. 'Tacitus, a celebrated Roman historian, who lived in the first century, in referring to the prophecies contained in the Bible, speaks of the books of the Jewish priests, as at *that time ancient*. Two thousand years and more have elapsed since they were translated into Greek. They were read in the synagogues every Sabbath day; commentaries on them were written; and copies of the Old Testament, as well as the New, have been spread into every region, and multiplied in many languages.'

Not only, therefore, has the Bible been safely preserved through all opposition, through all the

past ages of its existence, and produced wonderful effects upon the tempers and lives of many millions whose hearts were fully set in them' to destroy the volume; but it carries on the very face of it those *marks* of divine original, which alone, as it respects instrumentality, have brought over the profoundest unbelievers.

There is a strange objection still lying against the Bible, which is its *simplicity* and *plainness*. — Set this objection over against one that has been answered, viz. its *obscurity* and *mystery*, and I have need to say but little on the point of plainness, in the style and manner of it.

God gave commandment to Moses to write all the words of the law '*very plainly*.' It is remarkable, that the very things on account of which infidels pour their sarcasms on the Bible, are the very things which, if they were not found there, would be alleged by them as evident proof of its essential deficiency, and not worthy of God. But the Bible is easy to be understood by all people, in all its fundamental points; in all essential to happiness and salvation. "The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." Habakkuk was directed to 'write the vision and make it *plain* upon tables, that *he* may *run* that *readeth* it.' Who that has ever read the ten commandments, which are the grand summary of the whole duty of man, was ever at a loss to know what they meant? What child was ever at a loss to know? And who cannot understand the sum of all, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself?" And how

important this is, as the book is designed for *all people*. It ought, then, to be very plain; and there is not a sentiment in the Bible, on the understanding of which the greatest good of men depends, but all may easily understand; and the most important parts are the easiest to be understood. If we wish to know what we are to be and do, to obtain the everlasting favor of the Highest, we find it plainly written, "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?" And "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." And our duty to men is as plainly revealed: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them likewise." Than this, nothing can be more reasonable: and surely, nothing more plain.

How plainly revealed is the *natural state of man*? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. The carnal mind is enmity against God; you hath he quickened, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." What can be plainer than the words of promise and threatenings? "He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." So of the final judgment and endless retribution of mankind, in Matt. 25: 31, to the end.

This perspicuity, simplicity and plainness are the more important, as the Bible is the rule, or law-book, by which all who have it are to be judged. As no good civil government will couch its fundamental laws in equivocal language and

enigmatical sentences, which few, if any, can certainly understand; so has not Jehovah; but *plainly*, so that nothing but defect in the will can prevent obedience. And if the Bible were unintelligible, it could be no rule of life, nor of judgment. But every man, woman and child that reads, can understand all its cardinal principles: and this is saying much in favor of its divine inspiration.

As to the *style* of the Bible, no book of mere human composition has ever equalled its majesty, sublimity and grandeur. Hear Moses: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky; the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." And Job. "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?"

There is also much in *Isaiah* that is very sublime. Take an instance: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand; who hath meted out the heavens with a span; comprehended the dust of earth in a measure; weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth,

and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers ; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. Behold the nations are as a drop of the bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the balance : behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing, and hangeth the earth upon nothing." Daniel's description of the future state of the just, is beautifully sublime : " They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." — Greece and Rome could boast of men of eloquence, whose style was indeed noble and sublime : and if men of modern date have excelled, yet neither have equalled the sublimity and majesty of the style in which the Scriptures are written. Look at one more text in the *Old Testament*, and one in the *New*, and I will bring no more. " And God said, let there be light, and there was light." " And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them."

I may add, that the native eloquence and undorned imagery of the *narratives* of the Bible, are equalled in no other book. The lively and glowing paintings of Milton, the smoothly flowing eloquence of Addison, and the strong and nervous composition of Johnson, of Burke and Pitt, are excellent indeed as human productions, but cannot compare with the style of Scripture.

As to the *matter* it contains, no other book is like it. The most brilliant descriptions of *heathen*

*gods*, compared with those of the God of *heaven*, fade away into the merest insignificance. The matter of man's *destination*, as an immortal being, is most vividly interesting; nothing can be more so. Then notice, in this connection, the character of *Messiah*, the scheme of *grace*, including what Paul calls, by way of emphasis and lofty eminence, "the great mystery of godliness:" the wonderful operation of the Holy Spirit, in convincing, renewing and sanctifying a people for their eternal salvation. Then notice the all-interesting doctrine of the general *resurrection*; a doctrine of most sublime interest to every rational mind: and connected with this, a future *judgment*, when the countless millions of Adam's posterity are to assemble before one judicial bar, to be tried by known and established law, and all receive their final destiny according to the eternal rule of equity, promulgated by the supreme Ruler of the universe, which destiny is to be without appeal, and without reconsideration forever and ever.

Now, matter of this sort cannot possibly fail of interesting the human mind far above any other subjects, and *all* other subjects combined; for it takes fast hold on the loftiest intellect, and all the noblest interests of intellectual and moral nature.

Abating, then, all that is interesting in the wonderful interpositions of divine Providence in behalf of his peculiar people recorded by Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and others, and the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles, which were acknowledged as facts by



their greatest opposers ; and abating, too, the acknowledged truth, that the Bible is the best book to regulate, improve and felicitate human society here, its developments of *futurity* render it superlatively interesting.



## LECTURE VI.

### 7. FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECIES. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

I now proceed to my last argument in proof that the Bible is the word of God ; which is,

#### 7. *The fulfillment of the prophecies.*

I take for my text the words of one of the greatest Queens of any heathen country. They are in Daniel, 5 : 10, 11, 12.

“ Now the Queen, by reason of the words of the king and his lords, came into the banquet house ; and the Queen spake and said, O king, live forever ; let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed :

There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods ; and in the days of thy father, light, and understanding, and wisdom, like



the wisdom of the gods, was found in him ; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar, thy father ; the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers ;

Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar : now let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation."

These heathens had confused notions about the great *Creator, Preserver* and *Governor* of all things. But still there was a sort of intuitive feeling, sense, or impression, that He, like the Athenian unknown God, was possessed of such knowledge and power, that he would make *true* communications to the mind of man concerning secret and future things. Daniel had foretold future events to Nebuchadnezzar, and revealed *secret* things to his mind. And now the Queen supposes, without a doubt it seems, that Daniel, whom they ought not to have forgotten, 'with whom was the spirit of the holy gods,' as she says, is able to reveal to the king the true interpretation of the hand writing on the wall of the palace.

I suppose all my hearers will allow, that God is as *able* to make such communications as he may please to make to the minds of men, as he is to work *miracles* by their hands. This point, I suppose, is settled, and is incontrovertible : God *can* reveal future things to man. And what I am *now* to show, is, *that he has done it*.

If now it can be clearly proved by *reason*, that future events were foretold *at the time* they profess to have been, and that what was foretold did actually *come to pass as foretold*, then it will be the voice of reason, that such was the inspiration of God; for no other being can certainly foretell future events. And certainly there is nothing *inconsistent* with the divine character, in making known to his creatures things to come.

There are in the Bible, as you all know, many professed predictions of future events, things nearer, or farther distant. And that they were *recorded* as predictions of future events, is evident from the united testimony of all who have written in ancient times concerning the prophets and their predictions. Take, for instance, what was foretold by Isaiah (45) of the taking of *Babylon* by *Cyrus*, king of Persia, about *two hundred* years before the event took place. Here the conqueror of Babylon is called *by name*, two hundred years before his birth, which is corroborated by history.

The most celebrated historians, Greek and Roman, Heroditus, Xenophon, Tacitus, Strabo, Pliny and others, bear testimony to the accomplishment of the predictions of the prophets relative to the existence, condition and destruction of Nineveh, Babylon and Tyre, as well as of other cities and kingdoms.

But I shall detain you with only carrying out, in detail, two or three predictions in their fulfillment.

The *first* I shall introduce, is the prophecy of

*Jacob concerning Judah,* You will find this in Gen. 49 : 10. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, until *Shiloh* come, unto whom the gathering of the people shall be." The meaning is, the tribe of Judah, according to the language of the east, should retain its own elders, judges and rulers ; or, in a word, *retain the authority till the advent of the promised Messiah.*

We find, that about nine hundred years after Jacob uttered this prophecy of Judah and Shiloh, or Messiah, Shalmanassar, king of Assyria, subjected the *ten tribes* to himself. This you may read in 1 Kings, 17. After this subjugation of the ten tribes, they were no longer a distinct people, but mixed with other nations, while the tribe of *Judah* remained a distinct people, and the lawgiver proceeded from that tribe. And even during the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, the tribe of Judah remained a separate people, and did not allow intermarriages with the Babylonians. And notwithstanding they were subject to the general government of the king of Babylon, yet they had the privilege of instituting and observing their own feasts and fasts ; of choosing their own elders, *governors* and *judges* ; of planting vineyards and gardens, and enjoying their fruits ; of building houses and living in them, as a separate people. (Jer. 29.)

When Cyrus issued the celebrated decree, that *the Jews should be restored to their own land*, he gave command, that the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought

from Jerusalem, should be delivered to the princes of Judah. (Ezra, 1.)

From this it is evident that they held distinct authority while in Babylon, though under the *general* government of the king of Babylon. And so they remained a distinct people, having rule, till *Christ*, the true Shiloh appeared in the flesh. And this is further corroborated by what the Jews told Christ, when he said to them, 'If they would continue in his word they should know the truth, and the truth should make them free;' Misapprehending his meaning, (for he spake in a *spiritual* sense,) they replied, with much assurance: "We be Abraham's seed, and were *never in bondage* to any man." This was true; Christ allowed it; the Bible testifies to it, and profane history attests the same. 'The sceptre therefore did not depart from Judah, nor the lawgiver from between his feet, till Shiloh came, and the people gathered to him.' The result is, therefore, that *Jacob* was a *true prophet*, and Jesus Christ, who was born of Mary, in the reign of Augustus Cæsar was the *true Shiloh* of whom Jacob predicted.

*Soon after* the advent of Messiah, the sceptre *did* depart from Judah, their power was taken away, and the nation dispersed.

In connection with this, I will bring to your notice a remarkable prophecy of *Moses* respecting that devoted nation. This you will find in Deut. 28. This chapter is too long for me to read to you; you must read it, and then see its application and fulfillment. It must suffice that I give you its *contents* in few words.

It foretells, with a great deal of particularity, the very sore and multiplied *calamities*, which should befall the nation, even their *final*, and *continued dispersion*!

When the Romans besieged Jerusalem, the beloved capital of the Jews, the latter were collected, in great numbers, from various parts of the country for different purposes. The nation of fierce countenance then fell upon them, according to prophecy, without 'regarding the person of the old, or showing favor to the young.'

Authentic history relates, agreeable to Moses' prediction, that the *famine* was so great, that, in whatever house they entered where there was food, they would fight, like hungry wolves, for a share! *Husbands* would greedily snatch the scanty food from their *wives*, and these from their husbands! Parents, from children, and children, from parents! The famishing *mother*, when the supply of nature failed, would even *then* deprive her pining infant of the last semblance of nourishment!! And, what is more shocking to the sensibilities of human nature, *mothers*, who were always ready to stand between their infants and all harm, did actually, as Moses foretold, *slay, dress and eat* their infants for very hunger!!!

Again; according to the prophecy, they were to be 'left *few in number*.' And so it was. Vespasian and Titus took ninety-nine thousand *prisoners*, and put to death more than *twelve hundred thousand*! — And, besides all this dreadful havoc of human life, vast multitudes died by *famine*; They killed each other; and many, *very many*

died by other causes, while they were besieged by the Romans.

Agreeable to the prediction also, Titus, the conqueror, sent them to Egypt, and sold them for slaves, and continued the traffic till the public market was so *glutted*, that no more could be sold. Then was fulfilled that part of the prediction in the chapter referred to, "They shall sell you for bond-men and bond-women, and no man shall buy you." i. e. You shall be sold till they will want no more of you, — till they will buy no more. Thus they have 'become a hissing, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations.' Not only were they, in great numbers, in Egypt, but, as Moses foretold, they were *dispersed* over all the earth. They betook themselves to every part of the inhabited world. There they are unto this day, and remain a distinct people, retaining their own customs, religion and language, as far as they are permitted to do so by their barbarous oppressors. Their *plagues* have been wonderful, and of long continuance, as the prophet predicted. For eighteen hundred years, they have been continually suffering almost all sorts of indignities, privations and plagues. They are now a standing and perpetual miracle, and a stubborn proof of the truth of the predictions concerning them.

Notwithstanding Moses lived more than *three thousand* years ago, he described the condition of that devoted people, from that time to this, through their numerous generations, as exactly as he could have done, if he had been a spectator of every scene, through the whole series of events.



Who then can doubt that he was instructed by Him, 'who seeth the end from the beginning,' to commit to writing the Pentateuch, which are the five books ascribed to him?

I will now present you with a few predictions respecting Messiah, and their fulfillment in *Christ Jesus* of Nazareth, in which his person, character and works, are plainly foretold. Isaiah spake of his *forerunner* calling him 'the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord.' He also says, (ch. 9.) "Unto us a child is born : unto us a son is given." And Daniel, ch. 9, foretold the *exact time* when Messiah should be born, and be cut off. Exactly in sixty-two prophetic weeks from the time that Daniel set, Messiah *was* cut off, sustaining precisely the character and condition foretold by him. And it is strangely amusing to hear infidels, in their sober moments, (for they have some such moments,) say what they seem constrained to say, about Jesus Christ. Lord Byron, whose fine talents have been worse than lost to the world, if not to himself, not only called Christ 'diviner than Socrates; but if ever God was man, or man, God, he was both, and Rousseau, a French deist, acknowledges that it would have been nothing less than a miracle, that such a character as that of Christ, if not real, should have been thought of by the fishermen of Galilee.' So far as these remarks go, they agree with the account the Bible gives of the Messiah, harmonizing with the predictions everywhere concerning him.

The 53d ch. of Isaiah, which was written more than seven hundred years before Christ, seems almost like a *history* of the transactions of the times, in which Jesus Christ suffered and died. It points out his character and sufferings, so particularly and precisely, that the stubborn Jews, it is said, omit that chapter in their reading and teaching, and even in their transcriptions of their sacred books. They seem to be afraid that conviction will be forced upon their minds, that *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom their fathers crucified, is indeed the Shiloh of their father Jacob's prediction. And we may safely say that testimony of this does come in from every direction.

I now invite your attention to a prediction of Paul, 2. Thess. 2, which portrays the character of the *papal power*, called, '*the man of sin.*'

Just as Paul predicted, the Pope of Rome has 'exalted himself above all that is called God, or is worshiped!' He claims the supremacy in church and state; the power and prerogative of *pardoning sin*; of saving and damning whom he will; thus taking, by the most impious assumption, *the throne of God*. He has, by his "lying wonders," enriched his coffers at the expense of the blood and treasures of many ten thousands. Millions of Jews and Christians have been massacred in cold blood, when peaceably dwelling in his ungracious dominions, by his ungodly bulls, or decrees, which his contemptible minions are proud to execute; and as many more have been dragged from their families and quiet homes, to the horrid inquisitorial court, to meet torture and

death in forms as cruel and inhuman as refined barbarity itself could invent. Their convents and *nunneries* are a striking fulfillment of Paul's prediction, 1 Tim. 4 ; " Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils ; speaking *lies* in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron ; *forbidding to marry*," as they do their priests, " and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." But happily, the day is fast approaching, when ' THAT WICKED,' as Paul emphatically calls him, " shall be destroyed with the brightness of the Lord's coming, and be consumed by the spirit of his mouth."

I will detain you with but *one* prediction more, which is *the preservation of the church*, the peculiar people, which profess the holy and self-denying religion of the Bible.

Isaiah prophesied concerning Jesus Christ, that he should ' see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.' That ' of the increase of his government and peace there should be no end.' And Daniel ; " In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed ; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, *and it shall stand forever.*" And Christ himself said to the church, " Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

And again he says, "On this rock," no doubt meaning himself, "will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." It will be recollected, that Christ's kingdom, or the church, is *diverse* from all other kingdoms; totally at variance with every carnal feeling, and has ever been opposed by all that is sinful in men, and by fallen spirits. Accordingly the *civil arm* has generally been raised to demolish it. And though a *little* flock, amidst a world in arms, and like *lambs* in the midst of *wolves*, it still *exists*, and proves that "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

I have brought to view but a very small part of the predictions contained in the Bible, and which might be traced out in their fulfillment; such as the prophecy of the *False Prophet*, and the rise and fall of empires, and the opposition of carnal men, to the pure and holy cause of God, our Redeemer, &c. But I have presented before you enough to show, that many events were actually foretold, hundreds and thousands of years before they took place. And I have shown too, that the Scripture history of these things is sustained by numerous writers both *for* and *against* the doctrine of divine revelation.

And now, I ask you to allow no more weight to the arguments used in support of the Bible, as the book of God, than is allowed to the same kind of arguments in support of other books. I ask for no *exclusive* favor to be shown for the Bible in the examination of its claims. I ask for no *priv-*

*ilege*, which should not be granted to all other books, in the examination of *their* claims to authenticity. In determining its authority, I have only to ask for it, that it stand on a *level* with other books, and stand or fall on the very *same kind* of argumentation. Accordingly, I have not stood here before you to vindicate *doubtful* characters; or to repair a broken or faltering system; such efforts it *needs not*. Therefore I stand not here to hold up 'a bowing wall, or a tottering fence;' but to ask for the Bible a fair, and open, impartial, and yet *critical* examination. I stand here also, if possible, to see it *disabused* of the wit of Shaftsbury, the sarcasm of Carlisle, the cunning of Voltaire, the sophisms of Hume, the round assertions of Bolingbroke, and the gibberish and the low and profane ridicule and slander of Thomas Paine. I stand here to invite you to a *manly* and enlightened investigation of the whole subject; and I now ask no more, and only say, *we are all equally interested in the discussion*.

I have now gone through with the examination of the subject, which respects the *claims of the Bible to divine revelation*; and have endeavored to remove the difficulties and answer the objections, which have been laid before me, supposed to obstruct the evidence in favor of such revelation. I hope I have done it, though briefly and imperfectly, with a spirit of sobriety, kindness and candor, as I promised and intended. If I have failed in doing so, I shall find a refuge in the liberality and candor of my numerous hearers, on

which I cheerfully cast myself. I am aware that very much more might be said on every topic, and much better said, both as to style and manner of presenting the subjects considered, as well as to the clearness, precision and point of argumentation. Nevertheless, I have my reward in conscious integrity, and in the hope that these feeble efforts may contribute an item to the edification and enlightening of some. And it is my ardent hope, that my friends, for whom these lectures were particularly designed, will not only consider it as an effort on my part to do them good, but do themselves the respect and kindness to search diligently, and with enlightened understandings, into this great and interesting subject, to ascertain whether these things are so, and be ready to embrace the *truth*, as this is all that can eventually do them good, and which *must prevail*.

It is still objected by infidels after all, that 'other religions are as well attested and of as beneficial influence on community, as the Christian religion.' If this objection has not been sufficiently answered, I must very briefly say, further, that I seriously believe that if you will sit down to the examination of the evidences *for* and *against* the several systems, which *have* claimed, or *do* claim the adoption of *rational* men, to say nothing of their immortality, your intelligent mind will decide in favor of the Christian revelation. And, in submitting this case, I am willing to lay out of the account all the counteracting influence of all those biases and pre-possession in



human nature in its fallen state, which pre-disposes men, unconsciously it may be, to decide in favor of a system of ethics and religion, which shall harmonize more exactly with their *feelings*, *their strongest desires*.

The *Alcoran*, it is true, contains many very good things; but it must be remembered that these were drawn from the Christian Scriptures. And what if the followers of Mahomet act more in conformity with their sacred books than nominal Christians with theirs: I ask why is it, that the *Alcoran*, which also contains many blasphemous and murderous principles, should command so much more respect and implicit obedience than the book of God, which Christians claim to be divine, and which contains nothing but what is good for man during his whole existence? Can it be resolved into anything except the *depravity* of his nature?

Should it further be objected, as it sometimes has been, that the *repeal* of certain enacted laws renders the Bible of doubtful disputation, I have a few things to say to the objection. Begin the Bible and read it all carefully by course, and you may understand all the will of God concerning your faith and practice. You will find many laws, moral, judicial and ceremonial; some relating particularly to the *moral* government of his kingdom; some to the *judicial*; and others more strictly *ecclesiastical*, and which have relation to the regulation and erection of the *church*, which he regards as "the apple of his eye" Now take the following principle and carry it out; viz. *All*

*his laws are in force and obligatory upon us till God, the great Lawgiver, repeals them.*

And here I will add, that the language of repeal, in every case, must be plain to the understanding of those for whom the law is designed; and I think this principle will not be disputed.

Now, for illustration, take the law of *sacrifices*, which was very plainly commanded, and given to the people of Israel, as seen in the book of Leviticus. That law was observed by that nation till Christ came. If now we can find no *repeal*, that law must still be in force. But we *have* a repeal, full and clear, in the *ninth* and *tenth* chapters of Paul to the Hebrews; to which I refer you.

So we can find a *repeal* of the *outward manner* of keeping the law of the *passover*; 1 Cor. 5.—The same of the law of *circumcision*; not the law of the *seal itself*, but the outward *form* of the seal, as in the last mentioned. So of all laws found in the Bible: all are in force till repealed by God himself.

## LECTURE VII.

RECAPITULATION. EVIDENCE PECULIAR TO BELIEVERS. EXHORTATION. INFERENCES. CONCLUSION.

In this concluding lecture, I place over my subject for a text, the words of Paul to the Corinthians:

"I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."  
1 Cor. 10: 15.

It seems that the apostle, in this chapter, meant to be understood as addressing persons of mature age, mature judgment, and enlightened understandings. "I speak as to *wise men*, *judge ye* what I say."

And the *subject*, too, which was the matter of his discussion, and which was the doctrine of the *resurrection*, he considered of immense importance: therefore he desired them to exercise the light and intelligence they had upon the subject under discussion, as men of *reason* and *sound judgment*.

Therefore, in giving a *summary* of what I have said in the preceding lectures, and in making some *deductions* and *appeals* to men of mature age and judgment, I call upon you, in the language of Paul, "*Judge ye what I say.*" *Truth*, without fear or blushing, *challenges investigation*.

The *substance* of the preceding lectures, as you know, was to *sustain* the doctrine, *that the Bible is the word or revelation of God*. In doing this, I endeavored both to *remove objections* and clear away suggested *difficulties*, and adduce *direct evidence from reason*, that the Bible is, as it purports to be, *divine revelation*.

I thought it suitable, in the outset, to give a brief view of the evidence there is in nature, that *One Eternal BEING* exists at the head of the universe. This was shown by the things that are made. The *world* and the things it contains, both *matter* and *finite intelligence*, must have a cause: and the cause of all things must be *without* a cause: and this great *first* cause must be an *infinite Intelligence*, and possessed of all desirable *moral* and *natural attributes*. This, it is thought, has been shown from *reason*.

I then took up the Bible, and my *first* remark, in order to clear the way for *direct* proof, was, that *God is able* to make a revelation to man.

2. That there is nothing that can render it *inconsistent with reason*, or with the *character of God*, that he *should* make a revelation to his creatures.

3. That a revelation from God is *important* and *necessary* for their good. They *need* it for a better understanding of the *divine* character, of their own, and of their *condition* and *obligations*, as *moral* and *accountable* beings.

I then explained *what I meant to be understood by a divine revelation*.

After answering some objections, I proceeded

to direct proof that the *Bible is divine revelation*, as explained in the preceding remarks.

My first argument was, *that the Bible is such a revelation, or book, as mankind need.*

Objections answered; and,

2. *The testimony the Bible gives concerning God and man, harmonizes with reason.*

Objections considered; and,

3. *Its harmony with itself.*

Here objections were answered against the *internal evidence* of the Scriptures.

4. *The manner and circumstances under which facts were related in the Bible prove its divine original.* Both the writers, actors and spectators had their outward senses to bear witness to facts, and *could not*, in the nature of the case, *deceive, nor be deceived.* Here other objections were answered, and the subject of *miracles* discussed.

5. The Bible has *survived all opposition*, and *gained advocates*, in all past ages, which is further proof that it is from God. And so,

6. *The effects it has produced on the tempers and lives of men.*

My seventh and last argument was, *the fulfillment of the prophecies.* A few of these were traced out in their fulfillment, and others just brought into notice.

And allow me now to say, there is a sort of *divine sanctity, or unction, spread over the whole book.* The *dignity and sublimity of its style*, and *greatness of conception*, have drawn forth the admiration of its learned friends and foes. Will you exceed in sublimity the following? "And

God said, Let there be light ; and there was light." And will you find equal sublimity in any other book, to the following sentence in Rev. 20 ? " And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, before whom the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them."

In this book you can find no duplicity, or concealment, among all its writers. Even its *mysteries* are suited to improve, and not mislead the reader. Divinity is stamped on its very *aspect* : it *looks* divine. It displays celestial glory, and breathes a divine benignity, peculiar to itself. It consoles the pious believer, and beguiles his tiresome way through the wilderness of this world. While tossed upon the tempestuous sea of life, it is his unvarying compass, his correct chart, and polar star, safely directing his course into the haven of everlasting rest.

I presume I shall be indulged with just stating and saying a few things on the *evidence* in favor of the Bible as a revealed book, which is common and peculiar to such as are made new creatures by its convincing and quickening power.

It is not pretended that such evidence is dictated by *reason alone*, yet, as it is not contradictory to reason, and is highly satisfactory to a respectable class of persons, I am sure that the candor and kindness of those who do not profess to have experienced that change, will indulge in a brief attention to the subject, that the whole ground which the important article of divine inspiration covers, may, in some sort, be explored.



There is, as you know, as there always has been, a class in community, though generally small, of whose respectability I leave you to judge, who *really believe* in what is called *experimental* religion, and *hope* they have been the subjects of it. And you will allow, I trust, that those persons generally are sincere in their profession, that God has graciously renewed their hearts to love the truth as it is in Jesus. Now these persons have an evidence *in their own souls*, that the Bible is *true, divine*. Their minds are enlightened, as they trust, so as to believe its doctrines, and their hearts renewed, as they hope; their moral feelings so changed, as cordially to receive that word as the rule of their faith and practice. As though cast into the mould of the gospel, they have received a divine impression, and a character which constitutes them '*new creatures*.'

Now, *these* can no more resist the evidence that the Bible is the word of God, than *you* can resist the evidence of your outward senses.

I will just give you here, in a few lines, the testimony, on this point, of the learned, as well as pious Matthew Henry, in his Preface to the New Testament:—“For my own part, if my thoughts were worth any one’s notice, I do declare I have thought of this great concern with all the liberty that a reasonable soul can pretend to or desire; and the result is, that the more I think, and the more freely I think, the more fully I am satisfied, that the Christian religion is the true religion, and what, if I submit my soul sincerely to, I may venture my soul confidently upon. I cannot but

think that the gospel of Christ has had some influence upon my soul, has had such a command over me, and been such a comfort to me, as is a demonstration to myself, though it cannot be so to another, that it is of God. I have tasted in it that the Lord is gracious, and the most subtle disputant cannot convince one who has tasted honey that it is not sweet."

I am, however, aware that *inexperience* cannot have just such evidence; they have no sympathy for such things; it does not exist in the nature of moral truth that they should have, because it is matter of *experience*, and not of speculation. — Says Paul, 1 Cor. 2: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually* discerned."

I suppose that none will deny, that some of the doctrines, prohibitions and requirements of the Bible are uncongenial with the feelings of men in unrenewed nature. That book requires a holy, prayerful and benevolent life, and prohibits all licentiousness and immorality. Hence all men of wicked feelings and practices are condemned by it. Accordingly some have said, they *hoped* it was not true. And it will take at least twice the evidence to convince men of the truth of what they dislike, that it will to prove to them what they wish to be true. And may not this have prevented many from examining the evidence in favor of the Bible? Have they not *stood off* from evidence, lest they should be convinced of its divine authenticity? Hence, as one

expresses it, "those persons who want a *comfortable* religion, without self-denial, humiliation and mortification of their lusts, readily fall in with curious speculations, and artful and interested deceivers of every description."

But we do well to keep it in memory, that if the Bible *is true*, as the greatest and best men in all ages have believed, after a thorough examination of its claims, it is all important, of *infinite* moment to us as the creatures of God. Our wisdom then is, to read it constantly and carefully. A critical examination has led many an infidel to receive the Bible as the book of God; and then to 'receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save their souls.'

I shall now exhort to the *study* of the Bible, in connection with the evidence of its claims:

1. As men of *enlightened* and *independent* minds.

And you will allow me to be more earnest, as the assaults of skepticism are now so common and so bold.

'The very *excitement* at the present day,' says Wilson, an English author of recent date, 'on subjects connected with religion, which have kept pace with the assaults of infidelity, leaves the uninformed believer more exposed to the revulsion which a state of decayed sensibility brings on. When men of warm religious affections are thrown upon their principles, if those principles are unsupported by solid grounds of reason, and some acquaintance with the evidences of Christianity, they are apt to give way for a time, and leave the

mind open to the temptations of the spiritual adversary.' Let me say here, that the evidence should be studied by every man, that he may give the *reasons* of his belief in the holy Scriptures. And I further say, and say it to all especially who may have any doubts on the subject, that it is *manly* to meet the evidence openly and fairly. It is *cowardly* to shrink from a fair investigation. Look the subject in the face; meet it; and meet it as men of reason and ingenuousness. If 'Bacon, and Boyle, and Locke, and Newton, and Boerhaave bowed their mighty intellects to the authority of revelation,' after the most learned and thorough investigation, 'and spent their lives increasingly impressed with the belief, *that the God of nature is also the God of the Bible*, may they not be allowed to rebuke the flippancy of youthful and unfledged infidelity, and be permitted to summon men to *inquire* before they *pronounce*? Is not their authority sufficient to call on the youthful skeptic to pause, and suspect that *possibly* he may be wrong?' Especially when we consider that these, and such men, have done incomparably more for science and the good of mankind than all the infidels the world has ever known? Take a view of the greatest and best of them; and what have they ever done to enlighten and felicitate mankind? What have Volney, Diderot, D'Alembert, Voltaire, Herbert, Shaftsbury, Tindal, Morgan, Bolingbroke, Gibbon, Hume, Paine; what have *they* ever done for the benefit of their race, in comparison with only *Bacon* or *Newton*; to say nothing of a bright constellation of natural

and moral philosophers, and a shining galaxy of learned laymen and divines, profound in science?

While we stand not upon great names for proof that the Bible is of God, but on the impregnable proof deduced from right reason, we know for certainty, that doubting is not evidence, that a sneer is not proof, and that ridicule is not argument against the inspiration of our sacred books. As ingenuous, independent and enlightened men, therefore, come to the investigation of this momentous subject.

And I exhort you to come to this subject,

2. *As men bound to immortality.*

In this respect, we are all *alike* and all *deeply concerned*. It cannot be a matter of indifference, or of minor concern to us, whether the Bible be true or false. We *must* unavoidably, be affected by it. The subject takes hold on our highest interests: It takes hold on *eternity*. Look at it herefore, as rational and immortal beings. Compare in a hypothetical process, the *religion of the Bible* with *all other systems* of religion. Those, who embrace the Christian religion *lose nothing* provided it should not prove true, and any other system should; and no other system gains anything, provided it be true. But if the religion of the Bible should be found to be true, and, of course, every other religion false, then whose is the *gain*, and whose the *loss*? and there is not a man upon earth, that does *certainly know* that the Bible is *not* true, or that any other system *is*. I ask the *atheist*, whether *chance* will not provide as well for the *Christian*, as for *him*? And if he

answer me according to the tenor of his own unbelief, he must allow, that *our chances are equal*. I ask the *deist*, if all are to be *annihilated* at death, what *he* gains over those, who believe in the immortality of the soul? If beyond this life, there *is nothing*, surely he *gains* nothing. I beg to know then, where is the *gain* of any *other* system, and where is the *loss* of that of the Christian?

Some will say, perhaps, as some have said, that there is gain in the *present* world; other systems are not so clogged and perplexed with doubts and fears, anxiety and terror. But you will allow me to question at least, whether the *atheist* is always free and clear of doubt and anxiety, while he can make no certain calculations for another hour! And whether the *deist* is always at *rest* while he expects soon to pass into non-existence? And some have doubted whether those who believe the Bible, and disbelieve in *future punishment*, are always free from doubts, respecting the truth of their system, as they do not *certainly know* but the orthodox system is true. And many are apt to think, that uncertainty and doubts do indeed spread over every other system, a gloom and darkness, which their abettors find it difficult entirely to dispel.

David Hume, an English historian and infidel philosopher, supported by nothing but bare infidelity, in life and in death, exclaimed in his lonely meditations, "I am affrighted, and confounded with that forlorn solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I look abroad, I fore-



see, on every side, dispute, contradiction and distraction. When I turn my eyes inward, I find nothing but *doubt* and ignorance. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive existence, or to what condition do I return? I am confounded with these questions; and I begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness."

This soliloquy is in character with infidelity, which seeks not solitude, and cannot bear to be shut up to its own reflections, or endure the reaction of its principles. So of Voltaire, a French infidel. Hear him exclaim; "Who can, without horror, consider the whole earth as the empire of destruction! It abounds in wonders; it abounds also in victims. It is a vast field of carnage and contagion. Every species is without pity, pursued and torn to pieces, through the air and water. In man there is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together. He smarts continually under two sources of evil, which other animals never feel; anxiety and listlessness in appetite, which make him weary of himself. He loves life, and yet he knows he must die. If he enjoy some temporal good, for which he is thankful to Heaven, he suffers various evils, and is at last devoured by worms. This knowledge is his fatal prerogative. Other animals have it not. He feels it every moment, rankling and corroding in his breast. Yet he spends the transient moments of his existence in diffusing the misery, which he suffers, in cutting

the throats of his fellow creatures 'for pay; in cheating, and being cheated; in serving that he may command; and in repenting of all that he does. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a world of wretches, equally criminal and unfortunate; and the globe contains rather carcasses than men! — I tremble upon a view of this dreadful picture, to find that it implies a complaint against divine Providence; *and I wish I had never been born!!*" — This is *infidelity* in its genuine character, unmasked, undisguised; and illustrates the necessity of some *other* religion to sustain the spirit of man.

And now in view of the whole subject, I have to state one more acknowledged principle; viz. *No system should be rejected, till a better one is substituted.* And it must be *proved* to be better, before it be admitted, by sound, logical argumentation. Therefore, before you have a right, as *reasonable* men, to reject the Christian system, you are *bound*, upon the honor of men of enlightened understandings, to *prove* by sound argument, that the one you propose is *better*. I ask then, with much assurance, what gain, what advantage has any other system of religion over the system contained in the Bible? We are willing to give a candid and impartial hearing to all the arguments, logic and moral demonstrations, that can be offered by the most able advocates of other systems, and allow all the weight to their arguments, which *reason* requires. And if it can be fairly shown, that any other system holds a superiority over the Christian, and is adapted to render

men better or happier, here or hereafter, we will gladly give up the worse for the better. *But it must be proved.* New schemes have not been tried so long as old ones. What system has been tried and proved so long as Christianity? Bring forward the system that has the test of twenty centuries, by nations and states living under its influence, and acting in civil and social life upon its principles. Christianity has had this test. I urge the principle. As in our courts, *he* is presumed to be innocent who is not *proved* to be guilty, I insist that you are under the strongest logical and moral obligation, to receive the system of religion contained in the Bible, till you bring forward another *better tested* than this. "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say."

And here I may ask, in the language of the American Encyclopedist; 'Where is the man, among all believers, whose logic or virtue has suggested and evinced an *improvement* of the system he renounces? Where is the infidel philosopher, who, in other inquiries, retains that scrupulosity of logic, which he tortures to perplex the evidence of the gospel? The blasphemy of Voltaire they try by *gentler* scrutiny than the doctrine of Jesus. With these men, and a multitude of their followers, the cruelty of some interested Jews, the obstinacy of a few ancient believers in magic, the palpable mistakes and misrepresentations of insidious or ignorant men, the apostasy of a profligate emperor, and the sneer of a petulant Frenchman; *these* are better logic with them, and they pass off as higher proof, than the opin-

ions of the learned, the practice of the virtuous, the certainty of the inference of the cause from the effects, the faith of nations, the accomplishment of prophecy, the demonstration of miracles, and the blood and testimony of ten thousand martyrs."

I will now close with an inference or two from what has been said.

1. *That the Bible can never be destroyed.* Being the word of *God*, it must stand forever. It is *truth*, and must and will prevail. Not all the sophistry of which an infatuated world is master, nor the malignity of wicked men and demons, in single or joint combat, can cast it down, or drive it from the abodes of men. You may as well think you can take the sun from the firmament with the point of your sword, and hurl him back to chaos, or, by an act of your will, sink the created universe into oblivion, as to meditate the annihilation of the volume *God* has written.

2. If the Bible is the revelation of *God*, we may joyfully anticipate the jubilee of the world. Then *Christ* shall 'reign on earth a thousand years.' 'All shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest.' 'Nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more.' 'From the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same,' says *God* by *Malachi*, 'my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in *every place* incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.'

And this period of universal peace and joy, which is called a thousand years, is sure to come; this *jubilee* of the world hastens on. And shall we not welcome its approach? 'The world, you know, has been full of sin and wretchedness ever since the fall. Superstition and brutality have marked every age. The gloom of moral death has spread all over the nations. The curse of God has rested on every nation, in every clime. Terror, devastation and death have overspread the world, and converted it into an aceldama, a field of blood unto this day! — But, since "the gifts and callings of God are without repentance," we may confidently rely on his gracious promises. He will summon the nations of the earth, and they shall cheerfully bow before him, and willingly submit to his righteous dominion. The whole world is to be regenerated, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God, when all nations and kindreds under heaven, shall embrace and act under the benign influence of those elevated principles, which stand out in bold relief throughout the sacred volume. The iron hand of despotism, which grasps the tyrant's sword, shall be unclenched, and every warrior's heart shall melt in love and tenderness, while "peace shall be extended as a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea." Therefore, let the righteous glory in the grace of God their Savior, while they steadfastly pursue the way the ancient worthies trod, without interruption and without fear. And I earnestly exhort all *unbelievers* to come to the perusal of the Bible, with a sober and reverential

spirit. I plead not for a superstitious adoration of the *book*, but as a communication of the great God to his dependent and guilty creatures. As such, we should approach it with modesty, meekness and docility. In approaching this holy ground, unloose your shoe, and walk softly, as though God were speaking with an audible voice. Peruse the word with the attention and interest you would peruse a pardon sent you, a criminal in the eye of law, sent you by the King of kings. And bear in mind, that the doctrines, requirements, prohibitions, promises and sanctions are all justified by *reason*. But what if some will not believe the exceeding great and precious *promises* of the gospel? It only proves that they have no *interest* in them. And what if you will not believe in its *sanctions*? 'Shall your unbelief make the truth of God without effect? God forbid;' for 'God is not unrighteous, who taketh vengeance.'

No man who has the Bible, can be excused for imbibing essential errors, or adopting such practice as shall hedge up his way to happiness and glory. The understanding must be darkened, not to be captivated with the sublimity and grandeur of the *subjects*, which compose the sacred Scriptures; and that heart must be destitute of holiness, that is not charmed by the *sentiments* which stand out on every page. If life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, and pardon may be had by a pure faith in its principles, then the *neglecters*, and especially those who *despise* it, have reason to fear, lest that come upon them, which was spoken by the prophets, "Behold, ye depisers, and wonder and perish!"



In conclusion, let all my hearers be entreated to yield up their intelligence and their hearts to the Lord. Your spirit, soul and body are his. 'I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord, which is your reasonable service.' I beseech you, by the invaluable worth of your never-dying spirits, that you 'break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by turning unto God,' while it is an accepted time, and a day of grace; for you hear the mighty Sovereign of the universe, yet upon the throne of mercy, calling after you, in the most kind and compassionate manner, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" O give Him your hearts, embrace the ennobling principles of the gospel, and practice according to its precepts, and he will save you with an everlasting salvation.

## APPENDIX.

---

No. I. [See page 13, near the top.]

Do atheists, (for there are those who would be thought such!) do such men really believe that the *instincts* of irrational animals happen *without design*? Is it all a *chance* that they so universally protect and provide for their young? Is it *chance* that furnishes them with the *means* of such protection and provision? Does *chance* provide for the *perpetuation* of the endless variety of species in air, and earth, and water, by creating an equal number of the sexes, and causing each to propagate *its own kind*? Is there no intelligent *design* to be perceived in this adaptedness and uniformity?

Again: did the innumerable particles of matter of which the solar system is composed, jumble together *fortuitously* into their present form and order? Do seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, proceed on in regular succession, century after century, and millenary after millenary, uncontrolled by established laws? Or did *chance*, which has no will or design, establish such laws? That must have been a wonderful chance, which *hung* and *balanced* the planets with so much nicety and exactness, that in their cir-

cumvolutions there should be no jar nor interference whatever among them! Is the exact proportion of the centrifugal and centripetal forces, which occasions revolutions so regular and exact that *eclipses* may be calculated for any length of time, past or future, without the variation of a moment; — is such perfect balancing as this, the effect of *no cause*, — of blind, unmeaning, undefined, and undefinable fatality, called *chance*? — Say not that matter is *eternal*, or that the world has always been as it now is, or that the *material universe*, as some modern freethinkers pretend to think, *is God*: for that which *changes* cannot be *eternal*, as every *change* must be an *effect* of an antecedent *cause*; for a thing cannot independently *change itself*, any more than it could *create* itself, which every one must perceive at first sight, to be the first-born of absurdities. And if, on the gross supposition, the *material universe were God*, then the material universe must be *intelligent* and *omnipotent*; for intelligence and omnipotence are visible wherever you turn your eye, or listen to a sound; whether you consider the wonderful organization of animal bodies, the seven original *colors*, or the seven original different *sounds* in nature, and the endless diversification of shade in the one case, and of modulation in the other. Probably the notable circumstance, *that intelligence, wisdom and power are seen everywhere*, is the reason of the more than Egyptian darkness, which envelopes the benighted minds of atheists. They overlook the true philosophy of the case, viz: that the invisible Deity, omnipotent, omniscient and

omnipresent, operates everywhere *in this matter*, unseen, yet unceasingly, which gives it the *appearance* of intelligence and independent animation, while matter only acts according to the exact laws, which the great Creator has constituted; and while those laws are nothing else but the power of the great FIRST CAUSE operating in and through every particle of matter of which bodies are composed.

The atheist is also driven into the same pitiful dilemma, in accounting for the existence of *intelligent* beings; either they came by *chance*, or were produced by an infinite and eternal INTELLIGENCE: for I will not admit for a moment, that an *intelligent* being can possibly be so monstrously unreasonable and absurd as to say, that *intelligence can create itself!* The whole system, of atheism, therefore, is so vapid, puny, and even palpably idiotic, that every rational man, in the sober use of his intellectual powers, must instantly abandon it. And were it not for the hope of dissipating the darkness in which his mind is so deeply enveloped, and preventing such darkness from settling over the minds of others, it would hardly be possible seriously to attempt a refutation.

It is truly a matter of wonder and surprise, that men, who give abundant proof of reputable, and even eminent intelligence in other matters, should be so grossly bewildered and lost to all sense of reason on this momentous and fundamental article in the religion of nature and revelation! May the Lord seasonably rend the veil from the

minds of all such, and graciously preserve us all from silencing or perverting the *reason* he has given us ; and *his* shall be the praise.

No. II. [See page 21, near the top.]

*Reason* in relation to man, is like *instinct* in the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and fish of the sea. They all *seek* what is for their health and comfort in the support of life, and *make use* of so much as is *good* for their health and comfort ; and if in any case they eat and drink to excess, it is owing to the sin or improvidence of those who control them, and who are the faulty cause of most of their misery.

Do you say, "it is according to the instincts of nature that they *bite* and *devour one another*?" But is not this rather a calamity fallen on them by the sin of man? Was it so before the fatal *apostasy*? Were they not all harmless then? and did they not all live as those did who were appointed to rule over them? and to rule, not as *tyrants*, but as kind and reasonable *masters*?

Lay this, therefore, out of the account. If they should follow all the instincts of original nature, which was "very good," like the ground before it "was cursed for man's sake," they would all be harmless, and live in perfect and uninterrupted peace.

So, *reason* in mankind directs them to what is best adapted to render them happy. It is not *reason*, it is not innocent *nature*, that dictates excess

in meats, drinks and exercise. If men *have* such an appetite as dictates excess in anything, it is an *artificial* appetite, procured by their own folly and imprudence; or *factitious* in the primary sense of the word, and then it is procured by a *presumptuous perversion* of the *reason* which God has given, — the plain and spontaneous dictates of unabused nature. Accordingly we find, (as is undoubtedly the case,) every climate producing food, physic, and clothing enough, and well adapted, for all its population of rational and irrational animals; and provided men would, as they might by their inventive genius and healthful industry, *ascertain* what is best adapted to their wants, as beasts, fowls and reptiles do by instinct, and were as sagacious in the *application* as well as discovery, men would not be under the mortifying necessity of taking lessons from that part of creation, over which they boast such a vast superiority.

The instincts of nature teach the irrational creatures of God's power, to protect and provide for their *young*. But, if a *human mother*, who is also taught the same by *instinct* and by *reason* too, under the influence of the intoxicating draught, which is contrary to nature, or by any other influence, becomes a monster; or if the *father*, under the heat of intoxication, "scatters firebrands, arrows and death," among the defenceless members of his family, who at least merit from him, and have a right to expect, the protection which the *lion*, not to say the lioness, gives to his whelps, — that man has not only silenced the instincts of nature, but *dethroned reason*, and becomes not a



*brute*, for to say this, would be a libel on the character of the brutal creation ; but he becomes a *demon* in human shape. As long as *reason holds her empire*, you will witness, to the same extent, domestic peace, comfort and prosperity. So of most of the infelicities in all ages and all over the world : you may trace them to the *perversion* of *reason* ; to a counteraction of the laws of nature. If all would follow these laws, every man would be the *friend* of every man ; and instead of mutual jealousies and wrongs, you would see each conspire to render the other happy.

Must not, therefore, the Being who has given such *instincts* to the *irrational* tribes, and super-added *reason to man*, be *supremely good* ?

No. III. [See page 29, at the bottom.]

Under the theocracy, when God, by direct inspiration, governed the nation of the Hebrews, the condition of *females* was elevated to a proper standard. They were neither the *lords* nor the *slaves* of men, but had their respectable rank in the world. And so the Bible everywhere teaches by its principles drawn out into practice. David represents them, (Psalm 144,) as they should be represented, and as they should *be*, "*Corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.*" As the foundation of an edifice is laid in exact conformity to the *corner stones*, so the state of *community* will be as *females* give the direction. It is in their power to bring up a profligate race which will sink by its own weight, into infamy and ruin, as the profligate Israelites were corrupted and ruined

by the daughters of Moab, according to the instigation of Balaam. As the *Bible* is the *only* book, or its religion and policy is what alone elevates women to their proper rank in the world, well may they employ their irresistible influence to give effect to the doctrines and duties of divine revelation, not only at home, but all over the world, in the greatest part of which they are now in a shamefully degraded condition, and will be so, till light, shining from the oracles of truth, shall show them a more excellent way.

It may not be amiss, here, to say a few things *on the importance to the community of female education and character.*

Females are like "*corner stones*" to the *community*, giving direction and shape to the whole political and moral, as well as scientific and religious state. And if they are "*polished*" after the similitude of a palace,—are *intelligent* and *virtuous*, they will raise up a well-organized, intelligent and virtuous community. Such has been *our* community onward from the days of the Pilgrims, because such were our *mothers*. They were not degraded below their proper rank of companions and governesses in their appropriate departments. They were not kept in ignorance, and consequent degradation, as among the Hindoos, where it is accounted a shame for females to learn to read; but they were well informed, and like the 'honorable women' mentioned in the Acts, shone as polished stones in the spiritual temple of God.

As on females devolves the principal care of raising a generation that shall take the government in church and state, how great is their respon-

sibility, and how carefully and intelligently should they be educated. Did *men* duly realize their prodigious influence, we should see the world alive for their education, both in science, morality and religion. The mother of Amaziah was as really his *destroyer*, as she was his *counsellor* to do wickedly. And the mother and grandmother of Timothy, were the occasion of his happiness and usefulness in the church, as they taught him from a child to know the Scriptures. They can give direction to genius, and shape the mind much as they please; for habits of thinking and acting are formed in the nursery, where the characters of men receive a stamp, which time will not obliterate. Woman's influence will run through all time, and *never* cease.

Though divine providence have ordained for women, in some respects, a more *limited* and *unobserved* sphere of action, yet it is honorable and important. They touch the secret springs of society, which turn the wheels which move the world. While they give the earliest instructions, and first direct their little intelligences how to think, and speak, and act, they have the training of all the philosophers, and statesmen, and philanthropists, and ministers of religion. All the mighty movements of the present day to reform and save mankind, as well as the past prosperity of our country, may be traced back to the *nursery*, where you will find the 'corner stones.' *There* the first impressions were made, the first sentiments taught, and the first inclinations given. *There* is wielded the destinies of nations, 'just as the twig is bent.'

And *there* the mighty, controlling power must remain : and there let it remain. There is more sympathy in their bosoms, and more tender sensibility than in those of our sex, whose lot in life is cast amidst the bustle, and business, and temptations of the world. We need their sweet and retiring, though powerful influence. Let the daughters of our land set their faces with united frowns against dueling, gaming, intemperance, idleness, profaneness and Sabbath-breaking, as well as against other vices, and there will be a reformation, in spite of parliament, prince or pope.

While *fathers*, therefore, are careful to give their *daughters* such education as shall fit them to govern the world, the *mothers* will early imbue the minds of their *sons* with such knowledge as shall make them "plants grown up in their youth," and safe *pillars* in church and state. I know that they desire the happiness of their children : and as they do, let them train them in habits of industry, virtue, and all good morality ; "Train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Thus, and not otherwise, will their "sons be as plants grown up in their youth ; and their daughters be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." Their bodies and souls are committed to their *mothers* for keeping and training ; and from their earliest infant smiles, they draw from them, though imperceptibly, not only physical but *mental* growth. While the mind is flexible and soft, they enstamp on their children their future character, as wax is turned to the seal. Kings, emperors, potentates of the earth, hold not a sta-

tion so important, so interesting, so responsible as *mothers*. And their *daughters* are destined like them, though it may be but little thought of, to exert a powerful and extensive, though it may be imperceptible and silent influence in giving form and character to church and state, as “corner stones” to an edifice; O let them be “*polished* after the similitude of a palace.” *As sure* as that another generation shall arise upon earth, *so sure* it is, that the young women of the present generation will give the next generation a character; yes, they will enstamp their own upon it, and the impress may endure for many generations. O, then, may our daughters abuse not the power; pervert not the mighty influence with which they are invested by the God of nature; but be moved by motives lofty and ingenuous, to that elevated course of life, which will at once be an honor to their sex, and a good blessing to their species. They have Sarah, and Hannah, and Anna, and Mary, with a company of “honorable women not a few,” set before them as worthy examples. — I know they will permit me, in conclusion, to beseech them, in a most kind and affectionate manner, by all that is interesting in time, and all that is valuable in eternity, to add to all their amiable accomplishments with which nature and education have endowed them, *that chief one*, “*the ADORNING of the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ORNAMENTS of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*”

No. IV. [See page 30, 3d line from bottom.]

It has not been uncommon for men of loose, heretical sentiments, to *undervalue* the importance of the religious and moral *principles* contained in the Bible, by alleging that they have *little or no influence on the practice of men*. They will tell you, "No matter what a man *believes*, if his *practice* be good;" intimating that his practice will probably be as good without, as with those principles: and to prove it, will point you to one and another of loose principles, who lead as honest and moral lives as those who imbibe what are called *orthodox* principles. — That there *are* such cases, I have no disposition to deny; would that they were more frequent. But I *do* deny that loose sentiments in religion, other things being equal, will induce that morality, which the great doctrines of the Bible will induce; for it is a true proposition, that men will act according to their *belief* or *unbelief*, other things being equal: and when they do not so act, the following are some of the probable reasons.

1. It may be, as it is in a moral community, *unpopular* to *act out* their loose sentiments. They are restrained from motives of *policy* to act in accordance with the popular sentiment. The history of man will show, that saying this, is no libel on the human character.

2. Some men are blessed by the God of nature with such *sympathies*, or *kind* and *ingenuous feelings*, as prompt them to act in harmony with the



dictates of good common sense, without having much to do with principle.

3. Others are cast in so heavy and earthly a mould, — are of such sluggish cast of character, as scarcely to act at all.

4. Others again, from their *learned* and *enlarged views* of the social and political state of men, are induced to adhere to what is best suited to promote the good of men in their social and civil state. And,

5. And principally, *they have been brought up under the strict principles of the Christian faith.* They find it difficult, as in all similar cases, to overcome the influence of such principles, which have been radicated in their mind in early life, and subsequently cultivated. So with heathens, Turks, Papists and Jews, in regard to their respective principles. And is it not even so respecting Orthodox Christianity? The influence is felt through life. The change of views does not annihilate the power of education. This power runs along, and runs on, as the machine, after the impelling power ceases directly to act. And this power is generally felt, in some degree, to the end of life, though men may not be aware of it.

No. V. [See page 36, close of Lecture 2.]

There are two objections I have heard stated to the remarks I have made relative to the *sun's standing still*, and the *shadow's going back on the sun-dial of Ahaz*. One is, that the earth might

stop her *diurnal* motion, or go back, without interrupting the rest of the system, or effecting any derangement, as I have supposed. But this is not *proved*. Besides, the *moon* stopped too. Now it is to be presumed, till it is proved otherwise, that such is the nice balancing of the whole connected system when set in motion, that *any* variation from the original order in that complicated machine, would derange the whole. When set in motion, it was probably on the principle, that all the motions, diurnal or annual, both of the primary and secondary planets were taken into the account, and were necessary to sustain a perfect balance.

The other objection is, *that God would not make such displays of power on such occasions.* But *this* is not proved.

I can surely see nothing derogatory to the character of an infinitely wise Being in causing the *whole* system to stop on those occasions, any more than in bringing fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice of Elijah, or arresting the laws of nature in the case of Daniel and his companions. It is by the display of *power* that 'the nations are to know that they are *but men*.' Why cause the Red Sea to divide, and water to gush from the flinty rock? *He* who has the sovereign control of all things, could as easily have smitten Korah and his company dead in an instant, as he did the hundred, fourscore and five thousand assailants of Israel, as to cause the earth to open and close upon them forever. It is by making *his power known*, that kings and nations are made to fear before him.

## No. VI. [See page 42.]

The religion inculcated and recommended in the Bible, has had many advocates who have deserved well of the literary and religious world; while others have made religion a mass of sensualities, fit only for beings of a grosser texture. Others, again, have considered it as altogether too *elementary*, — too subtle or refined for the present state of being. ‘They have refined it down by a sort of moral chymistry,’ till nothing remains adapted to *common use*; purely *spiritual*, and must be reserved for another, and different state of being. Others consider it a *gloomy* religion, inducing melancholy, and suited to damp the joys, diminish the pleasures, and destroy the happiness of man. But those who have felt its power, *know* to the contrary. And some have invidiously charged upon Christianity almost all the evils that are experienced in human society. They will tell you that “Christ came to set a man at variance against his father, the daughter against her mother,” &c. But, the truth is, Christ did not say that such would be the *natural tendency* of his religion; but that such events would *follow* the introduction of the gospel; and because men would set their hearts against the pure doctrines and self-denying practices, which it enjoined. — Whenever, therefore, you are interrogated with, “Whence come wars and fightings,” it will always be safe to reply, as James has taught you, “Come they not hence, even of your lusts?”

Alas! here is the fruitful source of all animosities, tumults, wars, bloodshed and death. But "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." This is the religion of the Bible brought down to practical use, and produced by the celestial principle of love to God and man, radicated in the soul, and thus assuming the empire of the mind. A revengeful disposition was never excited or cherished by pure religion. If communities suffer from the evil passions, it is for the *want* of religion. Men are not worse members of community because they are religious: our state prisons are not occupied by such people as live according to the principles of Christianity. Ask every hangman how many robbers and murderers he has choked by the halter, who were brought there by leading a life of godliness? Ask our judicial courts whether they think the criminals brought before them for trial, were arraigned for "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts?" Who are the fomenters of discord, hatred, variance, emulations, wraths, strifes, seditions, heresies? Who believes that the thief obeys the eighth commandment; the murderer, the sixth; or the liar, the ninth? When you pulled your intoxicated neighbor out of the ditch, did you think he came there by being "*temperate* in all things," as the Bible requires? When you saw the peace of families broken up, the wife and children grossly abused, and even murdered by an almost infernal father and husband, did you

think he was acting under the influence of revealed religion? And, if you see *good men speak or do wrong*, you cannot charge it to *religion*, but to unsubdued *passions*. If they are unkind, it is not because they *have religion*, but because they have not *enough* of it, and are not enough under its control. Idleness, poverty and want are not induced by religion, but by "spending money for that which is not bread," contrary to the requirements of religion, "and their labor for that which satisfieth not." Whatever may have been said, or thought to the contrary, *lawful authority* has been *least* resisted, where religion has *most* prevailed; and those who have been imbued with its spirit, and actuated by its power, have been, and now are, the best supporters of government.

Human science has done much to mitigate the distresses of men, and benefit the world: it has suggested many useful inventions and improvements, to lengthen and felicitate human existence; but the most cultivated and refined state of society *without religion*, has ever been destitute of what constitutes the highest happiness the world is capable of enjoying. Let religion go down, and free government will go down as fast. Religion, with its institutions, is the bulwark of the state. Let the holy Sabbath, public prayer, and preaching of the word be forgotten, or remembered only to be rejected and despised, and there is an end to liberty, order, and happiness in community. Revealed religion prompts its possessor to seek and delight in the general welfare. As in large communities, so in families, which are not under the

influence of religion, (to use the words of another,) "the rough edges of one man often rub against those of another, and the friction is such as to injure the works, and disturb the just arrangements and regular motions of the social machine." But where religion predominates in families and communities, "all those roughnesses are filed down, every wheel rolls round smoothly in the performance of its appointed functions, and there is nothing to retard their several movements, or to break in upon the general order."

As to *individuals*, religion so purifies and elevates the pleasures of life, that all the artificial luxuries within the compass of man's invention, can hardly be brought for a comparison. It secures an enlarged and ennobled feeling, a comprehension of thought, and expansion of soul, which associates him with angels, and renders him godlike. "The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Christianity requires none of those austerities, mortifications and severities, which other religions require; nor popish penances, which are at once painful, ridiculous and absurd. True religion is a substitute for *honor*. It is honor; for though a man be deprived of all the honors of the world, he has that which comes from *God*, and is born to a kingdom. It is *pleasure* too, refined and exalted. It has not dried up the fountains, nor diverted a stream, which constitutes an essential part of his felicity. The mighty stream which bears along with it perennial felicity, has its source in the heart of paradise. — Religion is also a valuable substitute for *wealth*. It is wealth;



—the “*true riches*.” While the wealth of the world often takes to itself wings and flies away, and *ruins* the man that dotes upon it, it has only taken from the good man a little equipage and furniture; but has not touched his *capital*; for that is sustained by the signature of Heaven. His very *dispositions* are happy. He has heaven, in miniature, in his very soul; is happy when alone, and happy when he can express the benevolent affections of his heart, in acts of kindness, sympathy and love. But the man of no religion is not so; if he is of a *malignant* disposition, he is unhappy when objects are wanting on which to spend his malignity. “He sleeps not except he have done mischief; and his sleep is taken away, unless he cause some to fall.”

There is another view we may take of revealed religion, which “brings life and immortality to light;” and it is this: *it lives* in all its excellence and glowing vitality, *after* the king of terrors shall have made his stern demands, and brought down what is mortal to the grave. Nature may yield to the overpowering force of time or disease; the world itself may be wrapt in extinguishable flames, and all it contains be burnt up; but *the good part* remains untouched; it is “a treasure in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt.” Its *durability* stamps upon it a value inexpressible; it is “charity that *never faileth*,” the “good part that shall *never* be taken away.” It detracts not a little from the value of *other* good which men enjoy, that it is *limited* in its duration. If it do not perish *with the using*,

as most of earthly things do, we know we shall not always enjoy it. How greatly is the value of temporal things diminished by the unavoidable consideration, that we hold them by an uncertain tenure! To-day you are rich; by to-morrow or next year, some unforeseen casualty, as in the case of Job, may strip you of all your possessions! Lovely as your dear families may be, and much as they may contribute to your happiness, not only is the *possession* of them precarious, but such is the instability of what is human, soon *their very existence* may constitute the very source of your infelicity! To-day you are *honored* with the courtesy, respects and attentions of the world; all may be proud to lavish their praises, and heap their honors upon you, with loud hosannas. But the lapse of a few short months may change the scene: for praise they may give you reproach, and obloquy for honor. You are now in the possession of *health*, which is the sweetest ingredient in the cup of life, and are surrounded with all that can render life agreeable: but at best and at longest, if not unsatisfying while they last, are of short and precarious existence! But if you possess experimental religion, you not only have it with all its celestial consolation *to-day*, but it is yours *to-morrow*; *time* shall not tarnish its glory, nor *eternity* obliterate its grateful recollections. Like gold, religion contains *in itself* the real value of sterling and indubitable worth; it is more than an equivalent for all the honors, riches and pleasures of this world, which, without religion, fail to make you happy; while religion, without these,

brings in the present life, "*a hundred fold more.*"

What can the man of no religion hang his hopes of happiness upon, when the world with its consolations shall fail? His sensual felicities will surely die; for he cannot always relish them. The gratification of the passions must, according to their nature, cease: his finical embellishments, which are of reputation among the fantastic and the gay, will all fade away forever!! At length, "Man giveth up the ghost; and where is he?"

No. VII. [See last paragraph on page 101.]

It might further be remarked, that the *incidental references* to men and events, by Christ and his apostles, is additional testimony in favor of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Jesus Christ *incidentally* spake of Noah and the flood; of Abraham and the prophets; of Sodom, and Jonah, and Nineveh; of Babylon and Tyre; of the Queen of the south, David and Solomon, &c. And the apostles *incidentally* spake of the same; as Peter, of Noah and the flood; Jude, of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them; Paul, of Egypt, miracles in the wilderness, institutions, customs, civil and ecclesiastical polity, &c. Now, these persons and events were often referred to as matters of *well-known historical facts, which none disputed*. How much this tells in favor of *the truth of the Bible*.

No. VIII. [See page 118, after the first paragraph.]

As it is very important that all should be able to defend the Bible with the power of conclusive reasoning, against the insidious and bold attacks of unbelievers of various casts, and especially such as admit the Bible to be divine revelation, I subjoin a few directions as to the *manner* in which the Bible should be read.

In the first place, come to the perusal of it with the *full belief* that it is *the word of God*, in whose hand are you and your destinies forever; and search with the impression that all your interests are bound up in that volume.

Come to the Bible with a heart fully set on *knowing the truth*, as that alone can be of any advantage to your immortal nature. Search as for your *life*, and turn indignantly away from that man, and from that sentiment which would obstruct your faithful and profitable perusal; and while you believe it to be the *infallible standard* of faith and morals, and are willing to hear all *reasonable* argumentation, turn a deaf ear to every caviller, and hear none of his sarcastic ridicule, or noisy invective; nor read those publications which substitute acrimonious, and sometimes high-sounding words for sense, and sneers for argumentation.

Secondly, come to the Bible with an *unbiased mind*. Have no *preconceived* opinions as a standard by which to try the Bible; but try your own opinions by *that*. Sit down deliberately to the

work, and compare one part with another, diligently and candidly, desiring to know the mind of the Spirit. Let the Bible speak *its own language*, and not a foreign tongue, which it is made to speak by forced constructions, and which would only perplex and lead you astray. Therefore depart not from the *obvious* meaning, if stern *necessity* do not require. You can be in little danger of misapprehending the mind of the Spirit, if you will search his inspired book with a free, unshackled, honest mind, as a being accountable to God, and desirous to know his will, in order to do it.

Again ; read the *whole* Bible. Learn what doctrines and duties it teaches, not from abstract sentences and isolated parts, but as *one entire* and *connected* volume. Harbor nothing of a cynical, or fastidious spirit, in your researches after truth. Read the whole with the sobriety and interest becoming an inquirer after his soul's salvation.

Further ; read the Bible *daily* ; search it daily, and take nothing *upon trust*, when you can obtain the truth by your own researches. Assume such *independence* as that of the noble *Bereans*, "*who searched the Scriptures daily*, whether the things they heard were so."

Also, read the Bible *by course* ; in the *order* in which it was written, or as it stands in your copies. You will then have an *unbroken chain*, as in other books and letters of business. This is the only way in which you can learn the *whole* revealed will of God ; and there is no other *method* which can assure you that you *do* read all his revelation. Miscellaneous and promiscuous reading is good,

and very proper and desirable; but unless you read the Bible *in course*, there may, and probably would be many important and deeply interesting things, which you would never see.

I remember a man, more than forty years of age, once showed me his well-preserved Bible, which he said, with some complacency, he inherited from his *grandfather*. I took it, and turning it over, found two leaves that had never been cut apart. Probably, if that sacred book had been read *in order*, as Luke wrote to Theophilus, those pages, which had been so long concealed, would have been read. — If God has written us from heaven, is it not treating him with *disrespect* if we do not *read* what he has so kindly written? As there is nothing *wanting* in God's sacred Book, so there is nothing *redundant*. Then read it *all*. And yet, with how much more neglect, and even *irreverence* do nominal Christians treat the Book of *God*, than Jews, Turks and heathens, treat their Talmud, their Alcoran, and their Mythology! And yet the *Bible*, and *no other* book, teaches what we must *be* and *do* to render us acceptable in the sight of our Judge, and elevate us to true nobility and happiness in both worlds. It should shame us to see with what avidity men will generally devour *human* works of narrative and biography, which present before them the renowned achievements of the great and powerful, while we so little prize the *sacred* Book, which contains what is incomparably more sublime, interesting and magnanimous.



Beware also, how you listen to the bold or insidious attacks made upon the Bible. "If others are bold, you may be bold also." If they have no argument more conclusive than *bold assertion*, your bare and bold assertion is as good as theirs, is as conclusive, and proves as much. But you are in the most danger, from their *sly insidious* attacks on the Bible. They will not fall upon the chief *citadel*, till they think they have demolished the *outworks* of Christianity, lest you take the alarm, and set a double guard. If they can shake your faith in what does *not affect the vitals* of Christianity, they hope to overthrow your faith in the *whole Book*. When the *pins* are drawn out, and the smaller *studs* and *braces* of an edifice are taken away, it is no difficult matter to overthrow its principal *pillars*, its *beams* and *rafters*. Hold fast, therefore, the *whole* of the faithful word, guard, with the eye of an eagle, and with the strength of a lion, every part of that sacred treasure. Wealth, learning and power never appear to better advantage, as they never subserve better purposes, than when they are made subordinate to the interests of immortality. With these interests properly in view, a man of enterprise, and without the imputation of being avaricious, may seek the wealth of both the Indies; the philosopher may unlock the secrets of nature for his *pleasure* as well as for his *profit*; and the astronomer measure the heavens, as well as pursue the course of general science; and the customary commerce of life be industriously pursued; and all is well.

Remember that these sacred records, received into your understandings "with all readiness of mind," and into your hearts with due complacency, will make you wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

May "the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, *establish, strengthen, settle you.*"







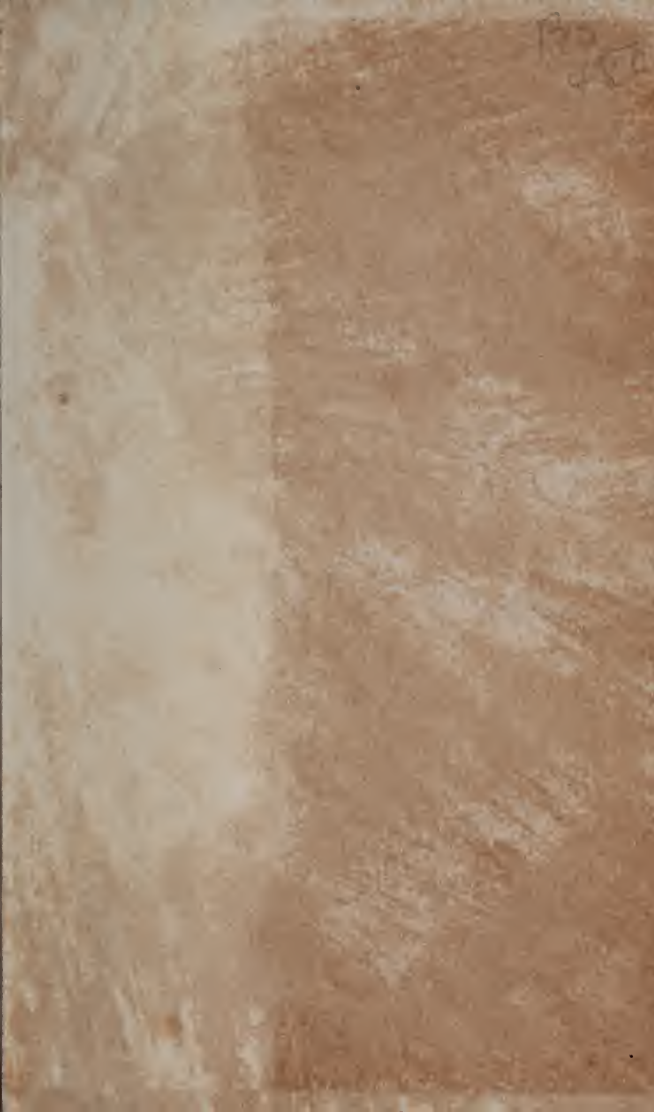
Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: May 2005

**PreservationTechnologies**

**A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION**

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 020 185 610 3